THE
ENGLISH REVIEW
OCTOBER, 1911

The Everlasting Mercy*

By John Masefield

From '41 to '51
I was my folk's contrary son ;
I bit my father's hand right through
And broke my mother's heart in two.
I sometimes go without my dinner
Now that I know the times I've gi'n her.

From '51 to '61
I cut my teeth and took to fun.
I learned what not to be afraid of
And what stuff women's lips are made of ;
I learned with what a rosy feeling
Good ale makes floors seem like the ceiling,
And how the moon gives shiny light
To lads as roll home singing by't.
My blood did leap, my flesh did revel,
Saul Kane was tokened to the devil.

From '61 to '67
I lived in disbelief of heaven.
I drunk, I fought, I poached, I whored,
I did despite unto the Lord.

* Copyright in U.S.A., 1911.

I cursed, 'would make a man look pale,
And nineteen times I went to gaol.
Now, friends, observe and look upon me,
Mark how the Lord took pity on me.

By Dead Man's Thorn, while setting wires,
Who should come up but Billy Myers,
A friend of mine, who used to be
As black a sprig of hell as me,
With whom I'd planned, to save encroachin',
Which fields and coverts each should poach in.
Now when he saw me set my snare—
He tells me " Get to hell from there.
This field is mine," he says, " by right;
If you poach here, there'll be a fight.
Out now," he says, " and leave your wire—
It's mine."

S.K. " It ain't."
B.M. " You put."
S.K. " You liar."
B.M. " You closhy put."
S.K. " You liar."
B.M. " This is my field."
S.K. " This is my wire."
B.M. " I'm ruler here."
S.K. " You ain't."
B.M. " I am."
S.K. " I'll fight you for it."
B.M. " Right, by damn.
Not now, though, I've a-sprained my thumb,
We'll fight after the harvest hum.
And Silas Jones, that bookie wide,
Will make a purse five pounds a side."
Those were the words, that was the place
By which God brought me into grace.

On Wood Top Field the peewits go
Mewing and wheeling ever so;
And like the shaking of a timbrel
Cackles the laughter of the whimbrel.
In the old quarry-pit they say
Head-keeper Pike was made away.

He walks, head-keeper Pike, for harm,
He taps the windows of the farm;
The blood drips from his broken chin,
He taps and begs to be let in.
On Wood Top, nights, I've shaked to hark
The peewits wambling in the dark
Lest in the dark the old man might
Creep up to me to beg a light.

But Wood Top grass is short and sweet
And springy to a boxer's feet;
At harvest hum the moon so bright
Did shine on Wood Top for the fight.

When Bill was stripped down to his bends
I thought how long we two'd been friends,
And in my mind, about that wire,
I thought " He's right, I am a liar.
As sure as skilly's made in prison
The right to poach that copse is his'n.
I'll have no luck to-night," thinks I.
" I'm fighting to defend a lie.
And this moonshiny evening's fun
Is worse than aught I've ever done."
And thinking that way my heart bled so
I almost stept to Bill and said so.
And now Bill's dead I would be glad
If I could only think I had.
But no. I put the thought away
For fear of what my friends would say.
They'd backed me, see? O Lord the sin
Done for the things there's money in.

The stakes were drove, the ropes were hitched,
Into the ring my hat I pitched.
My corner faced the Squire's park
Just where the fir trees make it dark;
The place where I begun poor Nell
Upon the woman's road to hell.
I thought of't, sitting in my corner
After the time-keep struck his warner.
(Two brandy flasks, for fear of noise,

Clinked out the time to us two boys).
And while my seconds chafed and gloved me
I thought of Nell's eyes when she loved me,
And wondered how my tot would end,
First Nell cast off and now my friend;
And in the moonlight dim and wan
I knew quite well my luck was gone;
And looking round I felt a spite
At all who'd come to see me fight;
The five and forty human faces
Inflamed by drink and going to races,
Faces of men who'd never been
Merry or true or live or clean;
Who'd never felt the boxer's trim
Of brain divinely knit to limb,
Nor felt the whole live body go
One tingling health from top to toe;
Nor took a punch nor given a swing,
But just soaked deady round the ring
Until their brains and bloods were foul
Enough to make their throttles howl,
While we whom Jesus died to teach
Fought round on round, three minutes each.

And thinking that, you'll understand
I thought, "I'll go and take Bill's hand.
I'll up and say the fault was mine,
He shan't make play for these here swine."
And then I thought that that was silly,
They'd think I was afraid of Billy;
They'd think (I thought it, God forgive me)
I funked the hiding Bill could give me.
And that thought made me mad and hot.
"Think that, will they? Well, they shall not.
They shan't think that. I will not. I'm
Damned if I will. I will not."
Time!

From the beginning of the bout
My luck was gone, my hand was out.
Right from the start Bill called the play,
But I was quick and kept away

Till the fourth round, when work got mixed,
And then I knew Bill had me fixed.
My hand was out, why, Heaven knows ;
Bill punched me when and where he chose.
Through two more rounds we quartered wide,
And all the time my hands seemed tied ;
Bill punched me when and where he pleased.
The cheering from my backers eased,
But every punch I heard a yell
Of " That's the style, Bill, give him hell."
No one for me, but Jimmy's light
" Straight left ! Straight left ! " and " Watch his right."

I don't know how a boxer goes
When all his body hums from blows;
I know I seemed to rock and spin,
I don't know how I saved my chin ;
I know I thought my only friend
Was that clinked flask at each round's end
When my two seconds, Ed and Jimmy
Had sixty seconds help to gimme.
But in the ninth, with pain and knocks
I stopped : I couldn't fight nor box.
Bill missed his swing, the light was tricky,
But I went down, and stayed down, dicky.
" Get up," cried Jim. I said, " I will."
Then all the gang yelled, " Out him, Bill.
Out him." Bill rushed . . and Clink, Clink, Clink.
Time ! and Jim's knee, and rum to drink.
And round the ring there ran a titter :
" Saved by the call, the quitter."

They drove (a dodge that never fails)
A pin beneath my finger nails.
They poured what seemed a running beck
Of cold spring water down my neck,
Jim with a lancet quick as flies
Lowered the swellings round my eyes.
They sluiced my legs and fanned my face
Through all that blessed minute's grace;
They gave my calves a thorough kneading,
They salved my cuts and stopped the bleeding.

A gulp of liquor dulled the pain,
And then the two flasks clinked again.

Time!
There was Bill as grim as death,
He rushed, I clinched, to get more breath,
And breath I got, though Billy bats
Some stinging short-arms in my slats.
And when we broke, as I foresaw,
He swung his right in for the jaw.
I stopped it on my shoulder bone,
And at the shock I heard Bill groan—
A little groan or moan or grunt
As though I'd hit his wind a bunt.
At that, I clinched, and while we clinched,
His old time right arm dig was flinched,
And when we broke he hit me light
As though he didn't trust his right,
He flapped me somehow with his wrist
As though he couldn't use his fist,
And when he hit he winced with pain.
I thought, " Your sprained thumb's crocked again."
So I got strength and Bill gave ground,
And that round was an easy round.

During the wait my Jimmy said,
" What's making Billy fight so dead?
He's all to pieces. Is he blown?"
" His thumb's out."
" No? Then it's your own.
It's all your own, but don't be rash—
He's got the goods if you've got cash,
And what one hand can do he'll do,
Be careful this next round or two."

Time. There was Bill, and I felt sick
That luck should play so mean a trick
And give me leave to knock him out
After he'd plainly won the bout.
But by the way the man came at me
He made it plain he meant to bat me;

If you'd a seen the way he come
You wouldn't think he'd crocked a thumb.
With all his skill and all his might
He clipped me dizzy left and right;
The Lord knows what the effort cost,
But he was mad to think he'd lost,
And knowing nothing else could save him
He didn't care what pain it gave him.
He called the music and the dance
For five rounds more and gave no chance.

Try to imagine if you can
The kind of manhood in the man,
And if you'd like to feel his pain
You sprain your thumb and hit the sprain.
And hit it hard, with all your power
On something hard for half-an-hour,
While someone thumps you black and blue,
And then you'll know what Billy knew.
Bill took that pain without a sound
Till half way through the eighteenth round,
And then I sent him down and out,
And Silas said, " Kane wins the bout."

When Bill came to, you understand,
I ripped the mitten from my hand
And went across to ask Bill shake.
My limbs were all one pain and ache,
I was so weary and so sore
I don't think I'd a stood much more.
Bill in his corner bathed his thumb,
Buttoned his shirt and glowered glum.
" I'll never shake your hand," he said.
" I'd rather see my children dead.
I've been about and had some fun with you,
But you're a liar and I've done with you.
You've knocked me out, you didn't beat me ;
Look out the next time that you meet me,
There'll be no friend to watch the clock for you
And no convenient thumb to crock for you,

And I'll take care, with much delight,
You'll get what you'd a got to-night;
That puts my meaning clear, I guess,
Now get to hell; I want to dress."

I dressed. My backers one and all
Said, " Well done you," or " Good old Saul."
" Saul is a wonder and a fly 'un,
What'll you have, Saul, at the Lion ? "
With merry oaths they helped me down
The stony wood path to the town.

The moonlight shone on Cabbage Walk,
It made the limestone look like chalk.
It was too late for any people,
Twelve struck as we went by the steeple.
A dog barked, and an owl was calling,
The squire's brook was still a-falling,
The carved heads on the church looked down
On " Russell, Blacksmith of this Town,"
And all the graves of all the ghosts
Who rise on Christmas Eve in hosts
To dance and carol in festivity
For joy of Jesus Christ's Nativity
(Bell-ringer Dawe and his two sons
Beheld 'em from the bell-tower once),
Two and two about about
Singing the end of Advent out,
Dwindling down to windlestraws
When the glittering peacock craws,
As craw the glittering peacock should
When Christ's own star comes over the wood.
Lamb of the sky come out of fold
Wandering windy heavens cold.
So they shone and sang till twelve
When all the bells ring out of theirselve.
Rang a peal for Christmas morn,
Glory, men, for Christ is born.

All the old monks' singing places
Glimmered quick with flitting faces,

Singing anthems, singing hymns
Under carven cherubims.
Ringer Dawe aloft could mark
Faces at the window dark
Crowding, crowding, row on row,
Till all the Church began to glow.
The chapel glowed, the nave, the choir,
All the faces became fire
Below the eastern window high
To see Christ's star come up the sky.
Then they lifted hands and turned,
And all their lifted fingers burned,
Burned like the golden altar tallows,
Burned like a troop of God's own Hallows,
Bringing to mind the burning time
When all the bells will rock and chime
And burning saints on burning horses
Will sweep the planets from their courses
And loose the stars to burn up night.
Lord give us eyes to bear the light.

We all went quiet down the Scallenge
Lest Police Inspector Drew should challenge.
But 'Spector Drew was sleeping sweet,
His head upon a charges sheet,
Under the gas jet flaring full,
Snorting and snoring like a bull,
His bull cheeks puffed, his bull lips blowing,
His ugly yellow front teeth showing.
Just as we peeped we saw him fumble
And scratch his head, and shift, and mumble.

Down in the lane so thin and dark
The tan yards stank of bitter bark,
The curate's pigeons gave a flutter,
A cat went courting down the gutter,
And none else stirred a foot or feather.
The houses put their heads together.
Talking, perhaps, so dark and sly,
Of all the folk they'd seen go by,
Children, and men and women, merry all,
Who'd some day pass that way to burial.

It was all dark, but at the turning
The Lion had a window burning.
So in we went and up the stairs,
Treading as still as cats and hares.
The way the stairs creaked made you wonder
If dead men's bones were hidden under.
At head of stairs upon the landing
A woman with a lamp was standing;
She greet each gent at head of stairs
With "Step in gents and take your chairs.
The punch'll come when kettle bubble,
But don't make noise or there'll be trouble."
'Twas Doxy Jane, a bouncing girl
With eyes all sparks and hair all curl,
And cheeks all red and lips all coal,
And thirst for men instead of soul.
She's trod her pathway to the fire.
Old Rivers had his nephew by her.

I step aside from Tom and Jimmy
To find if she'd a kiss to gimme.
I blew out lamp 'fore she could speak.
She said, "If you ain't got a cheek,"
And then beside me in the dim,
"Did he beat you or you beat him?"
"Why I beat him" (though that was wrong).
She said, "You must be turble strong.
I'd be afraid you'd beat me, too."
"You'd not," I said, "I wouldn't do."
"Never?"
"No, never."
"Never?"
"No."
"O Saul. Here's missus. Let me go."
It wasn't missus, so I didn't,
Whether I mid do or I midn't,
Until she'd promised we should meet
Next evening, six, at top of street,
When we could have a quiet talk
On that low wall up Worcester Walk.
And while we whispered there together

I give her silver for a feather
And felt a drunkenness like wine
And shut out Christ in husks and swine.
I felt the dart strike through my liver.
God punish me for't and forgive her.

Each one could be a Jesus mild,
Each one has been a little child.
A little child with laughing look,
A lovely white unwritten book;
A book that God will take, my friend,
As each goes out at journey's end.
The Lord Who gave us Earth and Heaven
Takes that as thanks for all He's given.
The book he lent is given back
All blotted red and smutted black.

"Open the door," said Jim, "and call."
Jane gasped "They'll see me. Loose me, Saul."
She pushed me by, and ducked downstair
With half the pins out of her hair.
I went inside the lit room rollen
Her scented handkerchief I'd stolen.
"What would you fancy, Saul?" they said.
"A gin punch hot and then to bed."
"Jane, fetch the punch bowl to the gemmen;
And mind you don't put too much lemon.
Our good friend Saul has had a fight of it,
Now smoke up, boys, and make a night of it."

The room was full of men and stink
Of bad cigars and heavy drink.
Riley was nodding to the floor
And gurgling as he wanted more.
His mouth was wide, his face was pale,
His swollen face was sweating ale;
And one of those assembled Greeks
Had corked black crosses on his cheeks.
Thomas was having words with Goss,
He "wouldn't pay, the fight was cross."

And Goss told Tom that " cross or no,
The bets go as the verdicts go,
By all I've ever heard or read of.
So pay, or else I'll knock your head off."
Jim Gurvil said his smutty say
About a girl down Bye Street way,
And how the girl from Froggatt's circus
Died giving birth in Newent work'us.
And Dick told how the Dymock wench
Bore twins, poor thing, on Dog Hill bench ;
And how he'd owned to one in Court
And how Judge made him sorry for't.
Jack set a jew's harp twanging drily,
" Gimme another cup," said Riley.
A dozen more were in their glories
With laughs and smokes and smutty stories ;
And Jimmy joked and took his sup
And sang his song of " Up, come up."

Jane brought the bowl of stewing gin
And poured the egg and lemon in,
And whisked it up and served it out
While bawdy questions went about.
Jack chucked her chin, and Jim accost her
With bits out of the " Maid of Gloster."
And fifteen arms went round her waist.
(And then men ask, Are Barmaids chaste ?)

O young men, pray to be kept whole
From bringing down a weaker soul.
Your minute's joy so meet in doin'
May be the woman's door to ruin—
The door to wandering up and down,
A painted whore at half a crown.
The bright mind fouled, the beauty gay
All eaten out and fallen away,
By drunken days and weary tramps
From pub to pub by city lamps
Till men despise the game they started
Till health and beauty are departed,
And in a slum the reeking hag

Mumbles a crust with toothy jag,
Or gets the river's help to end
The life too wrecked for man to mend.

We spat and smoked and took our swipe
Till Silas up and tap his pipe,
And begged us all to pay attention
Because he'd several things to mention.
We'd seen the fight (Hear, hear, That's you);
But still one task remained to do,
That task was his, he didn't shun it,
To give the purse to him as won it.
With this remark, from start to out
He'd never seen a brisker bout.
There was the purse. At that he'd leave it,
Let Kane come forward to receive it.

I took the purse and hemmed and bowed,
And called for gin punch for the crowd;
And when the second bowl was done,
I called, "Let's have another one."
Si's wife come in and sipped and sipped
(As women will) till she was pipped.
And Si hit Dicky Twot a clouter
Because he put his arm about her;
But after Si got overtasked
She sat and kissed whoever asked.
My Doxy Jane was splashed by this,
I took her on my knee to kiss.
And Tom cried out, "O damn the gin;
Why can't we all have women in?
Bess Evans, now, or Sister Polly,
Or those two housemaids at the Folly?
Let someone nip to Biddy Price's,
They'd all come in a brace of trices.
Rose Davies, Sue, and Betsy Perks;
One man, one girl, and damn all Turks."
But, no. "More gin," they cried; "Come on.
We'll have the girls in when it's gone."
So round the gin went, hot and heady,
Hot Hollands punch on top of deady.

Hot Hollands punch on top of stout
Puts madness in and wisdom out.
From drunken man to drunken man
The drunken madness raged and ran.
" I'm climber Joe who climbed the spire."
" You're climber Joe the liar."
" Who says I lie ? "
" I do."
" You lie,
I climbed the spire and had a fly."
" I'm French Suzanne, the Circus Dancer,
I'm going to dance a Lancer."
" If I'd my rights I'm Squire's heir."
" By rights I'd be a millionaire."
" By rights I'd be the lord of you,
But Farmer Scriggins had his do,
He done me, so I've had to hoove it,
I've got it all wrote down to prove it.
And one of these dark winter nights
He'll learn I mean to have my rights ;
I'll him a fix,
I'll burn his ricks."

From three long hours of gin and smokes,
And two girls' breath and fifteen blokes,
A warmish night, and windows shut,
The room stank like a fox's gut.
The heat and smell and drinking deep
Began to stun the gang to sleep.
Some fell downstairs to sleep on the mat,
Some snored it sodden where they sat.
Dick Twot had lost a tooth and wept,
But all the drunken others slept.
Jane slept beside me in the chair,
And I got up—I wanted air.

I opened window wide and leaned
Out of that pigstye of the fiend
And felt a cool wind go like grace
About the sleeping market-place.
The clock struck three, and sweetly, slowly,
The bells chimed Holy, Holy, Holy ;

And in a second's pause there fell
The cold note of the chapel bell,
And then a cock crew, flapping wings,
And summat made me think of things.
How long those ticking clocks had gone
From church and chapel, on and on,
Ticking the time out, ticking slow
To men and girls who'd come and go,
And how they ticked in belfry dark
When half the town was bishop's park,
And how they'd rung a chime full tilt
The night after the church was built,
And how that night was Michael's Feast,
The night I'd fought and been a beast.
And how a change had come. And then
I thought, " You tick to different men."

What with the fight and what with drinking
And being awake alone there thinking,
My mind began to carp and tetter,
" If this life's all, the beasts are better."
And then I thought, " I wish I'd seen
The many towns this town has been ;
I wish I knew if they'd a-got
A kind of summat we've a-not,
If them as built the church so fair
Were half the chaps folk say they were—
For they'd the skill to draw their plan,
And skill's a joy to any man;
And they'd the strength, not skill alone,
To build it beautiful in stone ;
And strength and skill together thus
O, they were happier men than us.

But if they were, they had to die
The same as every one and I,
And no one lives again, but dies.
And all the bright goes out of eyes,
And all the skill goes out of hands,
And all the wise brain understands,
And all the beauty, all the power
Is cut down like a withered flower.

In all the show from birth to rest
I give the poor dumb cattle best."

I wondered, then, why life should be,
And what would be the end of me
When youth and health and strength were gone
And cold old age came creeping on ?
A keeper's gun ? The Union ward ?
Or that new quod at Hereford ?
And looking round I felt disgust
At all the nights of drink and lust,
And all the looks of all the swine
Who'd said that they were friends of mine ;
And yet I knew, when morning came,
The morning would be just the same,
For I'd have drinks and Jane would meet me
And drunken Silas Jones would greet me,
And I'd risk quod and keeper's gun
Till all the silly game was done.
" For parson chaps are mad, supposin'
A chap can change the road he's chosen."
And then the Devil whispered, " Saul,
Why should you want to live at all ?
Why fret and sweat and try to mend ?
It's all the same thing in the end.
But when it's done," he said, " its ended.
Why stand it, since it can't be mended ? "
And in my heart I heard him plain,
" Throw yourself down and end it, Kane."

" Why not ? " said I. " Why not ? But no.
I won't. I've never had my go.
I've not had all the world can give.
Death by and by, but first I'll live.
The world owes me my time of times,
And that time's coming now, by crimes."

A madness took me then, I felt
I'd like to hit the world a belt.
I felt that I could fly through air—
A screaming star with blazing hair,
A rushing comet, crackling, numbing

The folk with fear of judgment coming,
A 'Lijah in a fiery car
Coming to tell folk what they are.

" That's what I'll do," I shouted loud,
" I'll tell this sanctimonious crowd
This town of window peeping, prying,
Maligning, peering, hinting, lying,
Male and female human blots
Who would, but daren't be, whores and sots,
That they're so steeped in petty vice
That they're less excellent than lice,
That they're so soaked in petty virtue
That touching one of them will dirt you,
Dirt you with the stain of mean
Cheating trade and going between,
Pinching, starving, scraping, hoarding,
Spying through the chinks of boarding
To see if Sue the prentice lean
Dares to touch the margarine.
Fawning, cringing, oiling boots,
Raging in the crowd's pursuits,
Flinging stones at all the Stephens,
Standing firm with all the evens,
Making hell for all the odd,
All the lonely ones of God,
Those poor lonely ones who find
Dogs more mild than human kind.
" For dogs," I said, " are nobles born
To most of you, you cockled corn.
I've known dogs to leave their dinner,
Nosing a kind heart in a sinner.
Poor old Crafty wagged his tail
The day I first came home from jail.
When all my folk, so primly clad,
Glowered black and thought me mad,
And muttered how they'd been respected,
While I was what they'd all expected.
(I've thought of that old dog for years,
And of how near I come to tears.)

But you, you minds of bread and cheese,

Are less divine than that dog's fleas.
You suck blood from kindly friends,
And kill them when it serves your ends.
Double traitors, double black,
Stabbing only in the back,
Stabbing with the knives you borrow
From the friends you bring to sorrow.
You stab all that's true and strong,
Truth and strength you say are wrong,
Meek and mild, and sweet and creeping,
Repeating, canting, cadging, peeping,
That's the art and that's the life
To win a man his neighbour's wife.
All that's good and all that's true,
You kill that, so I'll kill you."

At that I tore my clothes in shreds
And hurled them on the window leads ;
I flung my boots through both the winders
And knocked the glass to little flinders ;
The punch bowl and the tumblers followed,
And then I seized the lamps and holloed.
And down the stairs, and tore back bolts,
As mad as twenty blooded colts ;
And out into the street I pass,
As mad as two-year-olds at grass,
A naked madman waving grand
A blazing lamp in either hand.
I yelled like twenty drunken sailors,
" The devil's come among the tailors."
A blaze of flame behind me streamed,
And then I clashed the lamps and screamed
" I'm Satan, newly come from hell."
And then I spied the fire bell.

I've been a ringer, so I know
How best to make a big bell go.
So onto bell-rope swift I swoop,
And stick my one foot in the loop
And heave a down-swig till I groan,
" Awake, you swine, you devil's own."

I made the fire-bell awake,
I felt the bell-rope throb and shake;
I felt the air mingle and clang
And beat the walls a muffled bang,
And stifle back and boom and bay
Like muffled peals on Boxing Day,
And then surge up and gather shape,
And spread great pinions and escape;
And each great bird of clanging shrieks
O Fire! Fire, from iron beaks.
My shoulders cracked to send around
Those shrieking birds made out of sound
With news of fire in their bills.
(They heard 'em plain beyond Wall Hills.)

Up go the winders, out come heads,
I heard the springs go creak in beds;
But still I heave and sweat and tire,
And still the clang goes "Fire, Fire!"
"Where is it, then? Who is it, there?
You ringer, stop, and tell us where,"
"Run round and let the Captain know";
"It must be bad he's ringing so."
"It's in the town, I see the flame—
Look there! Look there, how red it came."
"Where is it, then? O stop the bell."
I stopped and called: "It's fire of hell;
And this is Sodom and Gomorrah,
And now I'll burn you up, begorra."

By this the firemen were mustering,
The half-dressed stable men were flustering,
Backing the horses out of stalls
While this man swears and that man bawls,
"Don't take th' old mare. Back, Toby, back.
Back Lincoln. Where's the fire, Jack?"
"Damned if I know. Out Preston way."
"No. It's at Chancey's Pitch they say."
"It's sixteen ricks at Pauntley burnt."
"You back old Darby out, I durn't."
They ran the big red engine out,
And put 'em to with damn and shout.

And then they start to raise the shire,
" Who brought the news, and where's the fire ? "
They'd moonlight, lamps, and gas to light 'em,
I give a screech-owl's screech to fright 'em,
And snatch from underneath their noses
The nozzles of the fire hoses.
" I am the fire. Back, stand back,
Or else I'll fetch your skulls a crack ;
D'you see these copper nozzles here ?
They weigh ten pounds apiece, my dear,
I'm fire of hell come up this minute
To burn this town, and all that's in it.
To burn you dead and burn you clean,
You cogwheels in a stopped machine,
You hearts of snakes, and brains of pigeons,
You dead devout of dead religions,
You offspring of the hen and ass,
By Pilate ruled, and Caiaphas,
Now your account is totted. Learn
Hell's flames are loose and you shall burn."

At that I leaped and screamed and ran,
I heard their cries go " Catch him, man."
" Who was it ? " " Down him." " Out him, Ern."
" Duck him at pump, we'll see who'll burn."
A policeman clutched, a fireman clutched,
A dozen others snatched and touched.
" By God, he's stripped down to his buff."
" By God, we'll make him warm enough."
" After him." "Catch him," "Out him," "Scrob him."
" We'll give him hell." " By God we'll mob him."
" We'll duck him, scrout him, flog him, fratch him."
" All right," I said. " But first you'll catch him."

The men who don't know to the root
The joy of being swift of foot,
Have never known divine and fresh
The glory of the gift of flesh,
Nor felt the feet exult, nor gone
Along a dim road, on and on,
Knowing again the bursting glows,
The mating hare in April knows,

Who tingles to the pads with mirth
At being the swiftest thing on earth.
O, if you want to know delight
Run naked in an autumn night,
And laugh, as I laughed then, to find
A running rabble drop behind
And whang, on every door you pass,
Two copper nozzles, tipped with brass,
And doubly whang at every turning,
And yell, " All hell's let loose, and burning."

I beat my brass and shouted fire
At doors of parson, lawyer, squire,
At all three doors I threshed and slammed
And yelled aloud that they were damned.
I clodded squire's glass with turves
Because he spring-gunned his preserves,
Through parson's glass my nozzle swishes
Because he stood for loaves and fishes,
But parson's glass I spared a tittle,
He give me a orange once when little,
And he who gives a child a treat
Makes joy-bells ring in Heaven's street,
And he who gives a child a home
Builds palaces in Kingdom come,
And she who gives a baby birth
Brings Saviour Christ again to Earth,
For life is joy, and mind is fruit,
And body's precious earth and root.
But lawyer's glass—well, never mind,
Th'old Adam's strong in me, I find.
God pardon man and may God's son
Forgive the evil things I've done.

What more ? By Dirty Lane I crept
Back to the Lion, where I slept.
The raging madness, hot and floodin'
Boiled itself out and left me sudden,
Left me worn out and sick and cold,
Aching as though I'd all grown old ;
So there I lay, and there they found me
On door-mat, with a curtain round me.

Si took my heels and Jane my head
And laughed, and carried me to bed.
And from the neighbouring street they reskied
My boots and trousers, coat and weskit ;
They bath-bricked both the nozzles bright
To be mementoes of the night,
And knowing what I should awake with
They flannelled me a quart to slake with,
And sat and shook till half past two
Expecting Police Inspector Drew.

I woke and drank, and went to meat
In clothes still dirty from the street.
Down in the bar I heard 'em tell
How someone rang the fire bell,
And how th' inspector's search had thriven,
And how five pounds reward was given.
And Shepherd Boyce, of Marley, glad us
By saying it was blokes from mad'us,
Or two young rips lodged at the Prince
Whom none had seen nor heard of since,
Or that young blade from Worcester Walk
(You know how country people talk).
Young Joe the ostler come in sad,
He said th'old mare had bit his dad.
He said there'd come a blazing screeching
Daft Bible-prophet chap a-preaching,
Had put th'old mare in such a taking
She'd thought the earth was quaking.
And others come and spread a tale
Of cut-throats out of Gloucester jail,
And how we needed extra cops
With all them Welsh come picking hops;
With drunken Welsh in all our sheds
We might be murdered in our beds.

By all accounts, both men and wives
Had had the scare up of their lives.

I ate and drank and gathered strength,
And stretched along the bench full length,
Or crossed to window seat to pat

Black Silas Jones's little cat.
At four I called, " You devil's own,
The second trumpet shall be blown.
The second trump, the second blast ;
Hell's flames are loosed, and judgment's passed.
Too late for mercy now. Take warning
I'm death and hell and Judgment morning."
I hurled the bench into the settle,
I banged the table on the kettle,
I sent Joe's quart of cider spinning,
" Lo, here begins my second inning."
Each bottle, mug, and jug and pot
I smashed to crocks in half a tot ;
And Joe, and Si, and Nick, and Percy
Trolled together topsy versy.
And as I ran I heard 'em call,
" Now damn to hell, what's gone with Saul ? "

Out into street I ran uproarious
The devil dancing in me glorious.
And as I ran I yell and shriek
" Come on, now, turn the other cheek."
Across the way by almshouse pump
I see old puffing parson stump.
Old parson, red-eyed as a ferret
From nightly wrestlings with the spirit ;
I ran across, and barred his path.
His turkey gills went red as wrath
And then he froze, as parsons can,
" The police will deal with you, my man."
" Not yet," said I, " not yet they won't ;
And now you'll hear me, like or don't.
The English Church both is and was
A subsidy of Caiaphas.
I don't believe in Prayer nor Bible,
They're lies all through, and you're a libel,
A libel on the Devil's plan
When first he miscreated man.
You mumble through a formal code
To get which martyrs burned and glowed.
I look on martyrs as mistakes,
But still they burned for it at stakes ;

Your only fire's the jolly fire
Where you can guzzle port with squire,
And back and praise his damned opinions
About his temporal dominions.
You let him give the man who digs,
A filthy hut unfit for pigs,
Without a well, without a drain,
With mossy thatch that lets in rain,
Without a 'lotment, 'less he rent it,
And never meat, unless he scent it,
But weekly doles of 'leven shilling
To make a grown man strong and willing,
To do the hardest work on earth
And feed his wife when she gives birth,
And feed his little children's bones.
I tell you, man, the Devil groans.
With all your main and all your might
You back what is against what's right;
You let the Squire do things like these,
You back him in't and give him ease,
You take his hand, and drink his wine,
And he's a hog, but you're a swine.
For you take gold to teach God's ways
And teach man how to sing God's praise.
And now I'll tell you what you teach
In downright honest English speech:

"You teach the ground-down starving man
That Squire's greed's Jehovah's plan.
You get his learning circumvented
Lest it should make him discontented
(Better a brutal, starving nation
Than men with thoughts above their station),
You let him neither read nor think,
You goad his wretched soul to drink
And then to jail, the drunken boor,
O sad intemperance of the poor.
You starve his soul till it's rapscallion,
Then blame his flesh for being stallion.
You send your wife around to paint
The golden glories of "restraint"
How moral exercise bewild'rin'

Would soon result in fewer children.
You work a day in Squire's fields
And see what sweet restraint it yields,
A woman's day at turnip picking,
Your heart's too fat for plough or ricking.

" And you whom luck taught French and Greek
Have purple flaps on either cheek,
A stately house, and time for knowledge,
And gold to send your sons to college,
That pleasant place, where getting learning
Is also key to money earning.
But quite your damndest want of grace
Is what you do to save your face :
The way you sit astride the gates
By padding wages out of rates :
Your Christmas gifts of shoddy blankets
That every working soul may thank its
Loving parson, loving squire
Through whom he can't afford a fire.
Your well-packed bench, your prison pen,
To keep them something less than men ;
Your friendly clubs to help 'em bury,
Your charities of midwifery.
Your bidding children duck and cap
To them who give them workhouse pap.
O, what you are, and what you preach,
And what you do, and what you teach
Is not God's Word, nor honest schism,
But Devil's cant and pauperism."

By this time many folk had gathered
To listen to me while I blathered ;
I said my piece, and when I'd said it,
I'll do old purple parson credit,
He sunk (as sometimes parsons can)
His coat's excuses in the man.
" You think that Squire and I are kings
Who made the existing state of things,
And made it ill. I answer, No,
States are not made, nor patched ; they grow.
Grow slow through centuries of pain

And grow correctly in the main,
But only grow by certain laws
Of certain bits in certain jaws.
You want to doctor that. Let be.
You cannot patch a growing tree.
Put these two words beneath your hat,
These two : securus judicat.
The social states of human kinds
Are made by multitudes of minds,
And after multitudes of years
A little human growth appears
Worth having, even to the soul
Who sees most plain it's not the whole.
This state is dull and evil, both,
I keep it in the path of growth ;
You think the Church an outworn fetter,
Kane, keep it, till you've built a better.
And keep the existing social state—
I quite agree it's out of date,
One does too much, another shirks,
Unjust, I grant ; but still, . . it works.
To get the whole world out of bed
And washed, and dressed, and warmed, and fed,
To work, and back to bed again,
Believe me, Saul, costs worlds of pain.
Then, as to whether true or sham
That book of Christ, Whose priest I am,
The Bible is a lie, say you,
Where do you stand, suppose it true ?
Good-bye. But if you've more to say,
My doors are open night and day.
Meanwhile, my friend, 'twould be no sin
To mix more water in your gin.
We're neither saints nor Philip Sidneys,
But mortal men with mortal kidneys."

He took his snuff, and wheezed a greeting,
And waddled off to mothers' meeting ;
I hung my head upon my chest,
I give old purple parson best.
For while the Plough tips round the Pole
The trained mind outs the upright soul,

As Jesus said the trained mind might,
Being wiser than the sons of light,
But trained men's minds are spread so thin
They let all sorts of darkness in,
Whatever light man finds they doubt it
They love, not light, but talk about it.

But parson'd proved to people's eyes
That I was drunk, and he was wise;
And people grinned and women tittered,
And little children mocked and twittered.
So blazing mad, I stalked to bar
To show how noble drunkards are,
And guzzled spirits like a beast,
To show contempt for Church and priest,
Until, by six, my wits went round
Like hungry pigs in parish pound.
At half past six, rememb'ring Jane,
I staggered into street again
With mind made up (or primed with gin)
To bash the cop who'd run me in;
For well I knew I'd have to cock up
My legs that night inside the lock up,
And it was my most fixed intent
To have a fight before I went.
Our Fates are strange, and no one knows his,
Our lovely Saviour Christ disposes.

Jane wasn't where we'd planned, the jade.
She'd thought me drunk and hadn't stayed.
So I went up the walk to look for her
And lingered by the little brook for her,
And dowsed my face, and drank at spring,
And watched two wild duck on the wing.
The moon come pale, the wind come cool,
A big pike leapt in Lower Pool,
The peacock screamed, the clouds were straking,
My cut cheek felt the weather breaking;
An orange sunset waned and thinned
Foretelling rain and western wind,
And while I watched I heard distinct
The metals on the railway clinked.

The blood-edged clouds were all in tatters,
The sky and earth seemed mad as hatters ;
They had a death look, wild and odd,
Of something dark foretold by God.
And seeing it so, I felt so shaken
I wouldn't keep the road I'd taken,
But wandered back towards the inn
Resolved to brace myself with gin.
And as I walked, I said, " It's strange,
There's Death let loose to-night, and Change.

In Cabbage Walk I made a haul
Of two big pears from lawyer's wall,
And, munching one, I took the lane
Back into Market-place again.
Lamp-lighter Dick had passed the turning
And all the Homend lamps were burning.
The windows shone, the shops were busy,
But that strange Heaven made me dizzy.
The sky had all God's warning writ
In bloody marks all over it,
And over all I thought there was
A ghastly light besides the gas.
The Devil's tasks and Devil's rages
Were giving me the Devil's wages.

In Market-place it's always light,
The big shop windows make it bright,
And in the press of people buying
I spied a little fellow crying
Because his mother'd gone inside
And left him there, and so he cried.
And mother'd beat him when she found him,
And mother's whip would curl right round him,
And mother'd say he'd done't to crost her,
Though there being crowds about he'd lost her.

Lord, give to men who are old and rougher
The things that little children suffer,
And let keep bright and undefiled
The young years of the little child.
I pat his head at edge of street

And gi'm my second pear to eat
Right under lamp, I pat his head,
" I'll stay till mother come," I said,
And stay I did, and joked and talked,
And shoppers wondered as they walked.
" There's that Saul Kane, the drunken blaggard,
Talking to little Jimmy Jaggard.
The drunken blaggard reeks of drink."
" Whatever will his mother think ? "
" Wherever has his mother gone ?
Nip round to Mrs. Jaggard's, John,
And say her Jimmy's out again,
In Market place, with boozer Kane."
" When he come out to-day he staggered.
O, Jimmy Jaggard, Jimmy Jaggard."
" His mother's gone inside to bargain,
Run in and tell her, Polly Margin,
And tell her poacher Kane is tipsy
And selling Jimmy to a gipsy."
" Run in to Mrs. Jaggard, Ellen,
Or else, dear knows, there'll be no tellin',
And don't dare leave yer till you've fount her,
You'll find her at the linen counter."

I told a tale, to Jim's delight,
Of where the tom-cats go by night,
And how when moonlight come they went
Among the chimneys black and bent,
From roof to roof, from house to house,
With little baskets full of mouse
All red and white, both joint and chop
Like meat out of a butcher's shop;
Then all along the wall they creep
And everyone is fast asleep,
And honey-hunting moths go by,
And by the bread batch crickets cry ;
Then on they hurry, never waiting
To lawyer's backyard cellar grating
Where Jaggard's cat, with clever paw,
Unhooks a broke-brick's secret door ;
Then down into the cellar black,
Across the wood slug's slimy track,

Into an old cask's quiet hollow,
Where they've got seats for what's to follow ;
Then each tom-cat lights little candles,
And O, the stories and the scandals,
And O, the songs and Christmas carols,
And O, the milk from little barrels.
They light a fire fit for roasting
(And how good mouse-meat smells when toasting),
Then down they sit to merry feast
While moon goes west and sun comes east.

Sometimes they make so merry there
Old lawyer come to head of stair
To 'fend with fist and poker took firm
His parchments channelled by the bookworm,
And all his deeds, and all his packs
Of withered ink and sealing wax;
And there he stands, with candle raised,
And listens like a man amazed,
Or like a ghost a man stands dumb at,
He says, " Hush ! Hush ! I'm sure there's summat."
He hears outside the brown owl call,
He hears the death-tick tap the wall,
The gnawing of the wainscot mouse,
The creaking up and down the house,
The unhooked window's hinges ranging,
The sounds that say the wind is changing.
At last he turns, and shakes his head,
" It's nothing, I'll go back to bed."

And just then Mrs. Jaggard came
To view and end her Jimmy's shame.

She made one rush and gi'm a bat
And shook him like a dog a rat.
" I can't turn round but what you're straying.
I'll give you tales and gipsy playing.
I'll give you wand'ring off like this
And listening to whatever 't'is,
You'll laugh the little side of the can,
You'll have the whip for this, my man ;
And not a bite of meat nor bread

You'll touch before you go to bed.
Some day you'll break your mother's heart,
After God knows she's done her part,
Working her arms off day and night
Trying to keep your collars white.
Look at your face, too, in the street.
What dirty filth've you found to eat ?
Now don't you blubber here boy, or
I'll give you sum't to blubber for."
She snatched him off from where we stand
And knocked the pear-core from his hand,
And looked at me, " You Devil's limb
How dare you talk to Jaggard's Jim ;
You drunken, poaching, boozing brute, you,
If Jaggard was a man he'd shoot you."
She glared all this, but didn't speak,
She gasped, white hollows in her cheek,
Jimmy was writhing, screaming wild,
The shoppers thought I'd killed the child.

I had to speak, so I begun.
" You'd oughtn't beat your little son ;
He did no harm, but seeing him there
I talked to him and gi'm a pear ;
I'm sure the poor child meant no wrong,
It's all my fault he stayed so long,
He'd not have stayed, mum, I'll be bound
If I'd not chanced to come around.
It's all my fault he stayed, not his.
I kept him here, that's how it is."
" Oh ! And how dare you, then ? " says she,
" How dare you tempt my boy from me ?
How dare you do't, you drunken swine,
Is he your child or is he mine ?
A drunken sot they've had the beak to,
Has got his dirty whores to speak to,
His dirty mates with whom he drink,
Not little children, one would think.
Look on him, there," she says, " look on him
And smell the stinking gin upon him,
The lowest sot, the drunknest liar,
The dirtiest dog in all the shire :

Nice friends for any woman's son
After ten years, and all she's done.

" For I've had eight, and buried five,
And only three are left alive.
I've given them all we could afford,
I've taught them all to fear the Lord.
They've had the best we had to give,
The only three the Lord let live.

" For Minnie whom I loved the worst
Died mad in childbed with her first.
And John and Mary died of measles,
And Rob was drownded at the Teasels.
And little Nan, dear little sweet,
A cart run over in the street ;
Her little shift was all one stain,
I prayed God put her out of pain.
And all the rest are gone or going
The road to hell, and there's no knowing
For all I've done and all I've made them
I'd better not have overlaid them.
For Susan went the ways of shame
The time the 'till'ry regiment came,
And t'have her child without a father
I think I'd have her buried rather.
And Dicky boozes, God forgimme,
And now'ts to be the same with Jimmy.
And all I've done and all I've bore
Has made a drunkard and a whore.
A bastard boy who wasn't meant,
And Jimmy gwine where Dicky went ;
For Dick began the self-same way
And my old hairs are going gray,
And my poor man's a withered knee,
And all the burden falls on me.

" I've washed eight little children's limbs,
I've taught eight little souls their hymns,
I've risen sick and lain down pinched
And borne it all and never flinched ;
But to see him, the town's disgrace,

With God's commandments broke in's face,
Who never worked, not he, nor earned,
Nor will do till the seas are burned,
Who never did since he was whole
A hand's turn for a human soul,
But poached and stole and gone with women,
And swilled down gin enough to swim in,
To see him only lift one finger
To make my little Jimmy linger.
In spite of all his mother's prayers,
And all her ten long years of cares,
And all her broken spirit's cry
That drunkard's finger puts them by,
And Jimmy turns. And now I see
That just as Dick was, Jim will be,
And all my life will have been vain,
I might have spared myself the pain,
And done the world a blessed riddance
If I'd a drowned 'em all like kittens.
And he the sot, so strong and proud,
Who'd make white shirts of's mother's shroud,
He laughs now, it's a joke to him,
Though it's the gates of hell to Jim.

"I've had my heart burnt out like coal,
And drops of blood wrung from my soul
Day in, day out, in pain and tears,
For five and twenty wretched years;
And he, he's ate the fat and sweet,
And loafed and spat at top of street,
And drunk and leched from day till morrow,
And never known a moment's sorrow.
He come out drunk from th' inn to look
The day my little Nan was took;
He sat there drinking, glad and gay,
The night my girl was led astray;
He praised my Dick for singing well,
The night Dick took the road to hell;
And when my corpse goes stiff and blind,
Leaving four helpless souls behind,
He will be there still, drunk and strong.
It do seem hard. It do seem wrong.

But 'Woe to him by whom the offence,'
Says our Lord Jesus' Testaments,
Whatever seems, God doth not slumber
Though he lets pass times without number.
He'll come with trump to call his own,
And this world's way'll be overthrown.
He'll come with glory and with fire
To cast great darkness on the liar,
To burn the drunkard and the treacher,
And do his judgment on the lecher,
To glorify the spirits' faces
Of those whose ways were stony places,
Who chose with Ruth the better part ;
O Lord, I see Thee as Thou art,
O God, the fiery four-edged sword,
The thunder of the wrath outpoured,
The fiery four-faced creatures burning,
And all the four-faced wheels all turning,
Coming with trump and fiery saint.
Jim, take me home, I'm turning faint."
They went, and some cried, " Good old sod."
" She put it to him straight, by God."

Summat she was, or looked, or said,
Went home and made me hang my head.
I slunk away into the night
Knowing deep down that she was right.
I'd often heard religious ranters,
And put them down as windy canters,
But this old mother made me see
The harm I done by being me.
Being both strong and given to sin
I 'tracted weaker vessels in.

So back to bar to get more drink,
I didn't dare begin to think,
And there were drinks and drunken singing,
As though this life were dice for flinging—
Dice to be flung, and nothing furder,
And Christ's blood just another murder.
" Come on, drinks round, salue, drink hearty,
Now Jane, the punch-bowl for the party."

If any here won't drink with me
I'll knock his eyes out. See?
Come on, cigars round, rum for mine,
Sing us a smutty song, some swine."
But though the drinks and songs went round
That thought remained, it was not drowned.
And when I'd rise to get a light
I'd think, " What's come to me to-night?"

There's always crowds when drinks are standing.
The house doors slammed along the landing,
The rising wind was gusty yet,
And those who came in late were wet;
And all my body's nerves were snappin'
With sense of summat 'bout to happen,
And music seemed to come and go
And seven lights danced in a row.

There used to be a custom then,
Miss Bourne, the Friend, went round at ten
To all the pubs in all the place,
To bring the drunkards' souls to grace;
Some sulked, of course, and some were stirred,
But none give her a dirty word.
A tall pale woman, grey and bent,
Folk said of her that she was sent.
She wore Friends' clothes, and women smiled.
But she'd a heart just like a child.
She come to us near closing time
When we were at some smutty rhyme,
And I was mad, and ripe for fun
I wouldn't a minded what I done.
So when she come so prim and grey
I pound the bar and sing, " Hooray,
Here's Quaker come to bless and kiss us,
Come, have a gin and bitters, missus.
Or may be Quaker girls so prim
Would rather start a hymn.
Now Dick, oblige. A hymn, you swine,
Pipe up the 'Officer of the Line,'
A song to make one's belly ache,
Or 'Nell and Roger at the Wake,'

Or that sweet song, the talk in town,
'The lady fair and Abel Brown.'
'O, who's that knocking at the door,'
Miss Bourne'll play the music score."
The men stood dumb as cattle are,
They grinned, but thought I'd gone too far,
There come a hush and no one break it,
They wondered how Miss Bourne would take it.
She up to me with black eyes wide,
She looked as though her spirit cried;
She took my tumbler from the bar
Beside where all the matches are
And poured it out upon the floor dust,
Among the fag-ends, spit and saw-dust.

"Saul Kane," she said, "when next you drink,
Do me the gentleness to think
That every drop of drink accursed
Makes Christ within you die of thirst,
That every dirty word you say
Is one more flint upon His way
Another thorn about His head,
Another mock by where He tread,
Another nail, another cross.
All that you are is that Christ's loss."
The clock run down and struck a chime
And Mrs. Si said, "Closing time."

The wet was pelting on the pane
And something broke inside my brain,
I heard the rain drip from the gutters
And Silas putting up the shutters,
While one by one the drinkers went;
I got a glimpse of what it meant,
How she and I had stood before
In some old town by some old door
Waiting intent while someone knocked
Before the door for ever locked;
She was so white that I was scared,
A gas jet, turned the wrong way, flared,
And Silas snapped the bars in place,
Miss Bourne stood white and searched my face.

When Silas done, with ends of tunes
He 'gan a gathering the spittoons,
His wife primmed lips and took the till,
Miss Bourne stood still and I stood still,
And "Tick. Slow. Tick. Slow" went the clock.
She said, "He waits until you knock."
She turned at that and went out swift,
Si grinned and winked, his missus sniffed.

I heard her clang the Lion door,
I marked a drink-drop roll to floor
It took up scraps of sawdust, furry,
And crinkled on, a half inch, blurry;
A drop from my last glass of gin,
And someone waiting to come in,
A hand upon the door latch gropen
Knocking the man inside to open.
I know the very words I said,
They bayed like bloodhounds in my head:
"The water's going out to sea
And there's a great moon calling me;
But there's a great sun calls the moon,
And all God's bells will carol soon
For joy and glory and delight
Of someone coming home to-night."

Out into darkness, out to night
My flaring heart gave plenty light,
So wild it was there was no knowing
Whether the clouds or stars were blowing;
Blown chimney pots and folk blown blind,
And puddles glimmering like my mind,
And chinking glass from windows banging,
And inn signs swung like people hanging,
And in my heart the drink unpriced,
The burning cataracts of Christ.

I did not think, I did not strive,
The deep peace burnt my me alive,
The bolted door had broken in,
I knew that I had done with sin.
I knew that Christ had given me birth

To brother all the souls on earth,
And every bird and every beast
Should share the crumbs broke at the feast.

O glory of the lighted mind,
How dead I'd been, how dumb, how blind!
The station brook, to my new eyes,
Was babbling out of Paradise,
The waters rushing from the rain
Were singing Christ has risen again.
I thought all earthly creatures knelt
From rapture of the joy I felt.
The narrow station-wall's brick ledge,
The wild hop withering in the hedge,
The lights in huntsman's upper storey
Were parts of an eternal glory,
Were God's eternal garden flowers.
I stood in bliss at this for hours.

O glory of the lighted soul.
The dawn came up on Bradlow Knoll,
The dawn with glittering on the grasses,
The dawn which pass and never passes.

"It's dawn," I said, " And chimney's smoking,
And all the blessed fields are soaking.
It's dawn, and there's an engine shunting;
And hounds, for huntsman's going hunting.
It's dawn, and I must wander north
Along the road Christ led me forth.

So up the road I wander slow
Past where the snowdrops used to grow
With celandines in early springs,
When rainbows were triumphant things
And dew so bright and flowers so glad,
Eternal joy to lass and lad.
And past the lovely brook I paced,
The brook whose source I never traced.
The brook, the one of two which rise
In my green dream in Paradise,
In wells where heavenly buckets clink

To give God's wandering thirsty drink
By those clean cots of carven stone
Where the clear water sings alone.
Then down, past that white-blossomed pond,
And past the chestnut trees beyond,
And past the bridge the fishers knew,
Where yellow flag flowers once grew,
Where we'd go gathering cops of clover,
In sunny June times long since over.

O clover-cops half white, half red,
O beauty from beyond the dead.
O blossom, key to earth and heaven,
O souls that Christ has new forgiven.

Then down the hill to gipsies' pitch
By where the brook clucks in the ditch.
A gipsy's camp was in the copse,
Three felted tents, with beehive tops,
And round black marks where fires had been,
And one old waggon painted green,
And three ribbed horses wrenching grass,
And three wild boys to watch me pass,
And one old woman by the fire
Hulking a rabbit warm from wire.
I loved to see the horses bait.
I felt I walked at Heaven's gate,
That Heaven's gate was opened wide
Yet still the gipsies camped outside.
The waste souls will prefer the wild,
Long after life is meek and mild,
Perhaps when man has entered in
His perfect city free from sin,
The campers will come past the walls
With old lame horses full of galls,
And waggons hung about with withies,
And burning coke in tinker's stithies,
And see the golden town, and choose,
And think the wild too good to lose.
And camp outside, as these camped then
With wonder at the entering men.

So past, and past the stone heap white
That dewberry trailers hid from sight,
And down the field so full of springs,
Where mewing peewits clap their wings,
And past the trap made for the mill
Into the field below the hill.
There was a mist along the stream,
A wet mist, dim, like in a dream;
I heard the heavy breath of cows,
And waterdrops from th'alder boughs;
And eels, or snakes, in dripping grass,
Whipping aside to let me pass.

The gate was backed against the ryme
To pass the cows at milking time.
And by the gate as I went out
A mold warp rooted earth wi's snout.
A few steps up the Callows' Lane
Brought me above the mist again,
The two great fields arose like death
Above the mists of human breath.

All earthly things that blessèd morning
Were everlasting joy and warning,
The gate was Jesus' way made plain,
The mole was Satan foiled again,
Black blinded Satan snouting way
Along the red of Adam's clay.
The mist was error and damnation,
The lane the road unto salvation.

Out of the mist into the light,
O blessed gift of inner sight,
The past was faded like a dream;
There come the jingling of a team,
A ploughman's voice, a clink of chain,
Slow hoofs, and harness under strain.
Up the slow slope a team came bowing,
Old Callow at his autumn ploughing,
Old Callow, stooped above the hales,
Ploughing the stubble into wales.
His grave eyes looking straight ahead,

Shearing a long straight furrow red ;
His plough-foot high to give it earth
To bring new food for men to birth.

O wet red swathe of earth laid bare,
O truth, O strength, O gleaming share,
O patient eyes that watch the goal,
O ploughman of the sinner's soul.
O Jesus, drive the coulter deep
To plough my living man from sleep.

Slow up the hill the plough team plod,
Old Callow at the task of God,
Helped by man's wit, helped by the brute,
Turning a stubborn clay to fruit,
His eyes for ever on some sign
To help him plough a perfect line.
At top of rise the plough team stopped,
The fore-horse bent his head and cropped,
Then the chains chack, the brasses jingle,
The lean reins gather through the cringle,
The figures move against the sky,
The clay wave breaks as they go by.
I kneeled there in the muddy fallow,
I knew that Christ was there with Callow,
That Christ was standing there with me.
That Christ had taught me what to be,
That I should plough, and as I ploughed
My Saviour Christ would sing aloud,
And as I drove the clods apart
Christ would be ploughing in my heart,
Through rest-harrow and bitter roots,
Through all my bad life's rotten fruits.

O Christ who holds the open gate,
O Christ who drives the furrow straight,
O Christ, the plough, O Christ, the laughter
Of holy white birds flying after,
Lo, all my heart's field red and torn,
And Thou wilt bring the young green corn,
The young green corn divinely springing,
The young green corn forever singing ;

And when the field is fresh and fair
Thy blessèd feet shall glitter there,
And we will walk the weeded field,
And tell the golden harvest's yield,
The corn that makes the holy bread
By which the soul of man is fed,
The holy bread, the food unpriced,
Thy everlasting mercy, Christ.

The share will jar on many a stone,
Thou wilt not let me stand alone;
And I shall feel (thou wilt not fail),
Thy hand on mine upon the hale.

Near Bullen Bank, on Gloucester Road,
Thy everlasting mercy showed
The ploughman patient on the hill
Forever there, forever still,
Ploughing the hill with steady yoke
Of pine-trees lightning-struck and broke.
I've marked the May Hill ploughman stay
There on his hill, day after day
Driving his team against the sky,
While men and women live and die.
And now and then he seems to stoop
To clear the coulter with the scoop,
Or touch an ox to haw or gee
While Severn stream goes out to sea.
The sea with all her ships and sails,
And that great smoky port in Wales,
And Gloucester tower bright i' the sun
All know that patient wandering one.
And sometimes when they burn the leaves
The bonfires' smoking trails and heaves,
And girt red flamës twink and twire
As though he ploughed the hill a fire.
And in men's hearts in many lands
A spiritual ploughman stands
Forever waiting, waiting now,
The heart's " Put in, man, zook the plough."

By this the sun was all one glitter,
The little birds were all in twitter;
Out of a tuft a little lark
Went higher up than I could mark,
His little throat was all one thirst
To sing until his heart should burst,
To sing aloft in golden light
His song from blue air out of sight.
The mist drove by, and now the cows
Came plodding up to milking house.
Followed by Frank, the Callows' cowman,
Who whistled " Adam was a ploughman."
There come such cawing from the rooks,
Such running chuck from little brooks,
One thought it March, just budding green,
With hedgerows full of celandine.
The 'fisher flickered by to fish
Like a blue gem in a green wish ;
An otter 'out of stream and played,
Two hares come loping up and stayed ;
Wide-eyed and tender-eared but bold.
Sheep bleated up by Penny's fold.
I heard a partridge covey call,
The morning sun was bright on all.

Down the long slope the plough team drove
The tossing rooks arose and hove.
A stone struck on the share. A word
Came to the team. The red earth stirred.

I crossed the hedge by shooter's gap,
I hitched my boxer's belt a strap,
I jumped the ditch and crossed the fallow :
I took the hales from farmer Callow.

THE END

How swift the summer goes!
Forget me not, pink, rose.
The young grass when I started
And now the hay is carted,

And now my song is ended,
And all the summer spended;
The blackbird's second brood
Routs beech leaves in the wood,
The pink and rose have speeded,
Forget-me-not has seeded.
Only the winds that blew,
The rain that makes things new,
The earth that hides things old,
And blessings manifold.

O lovely lily clean,
O lily springing green,
O lily bursting white,
Dear lily of delight:
Spring in my heart agen
That I may flower to men.

Death

By Henry Handel Richardson

. . . den vanskelige död
Niels Lyhne

MARY CHRISTINA was going to die.—For sixty years, come March, she had been an inhabitant of the earth, and she had suffered her full share of life's vicissitudes: she had passed from girl to woman, had loved and been loved, had borne children and tended children, had watched young faces lose their youth, and harden, and grow unbeautiful; she had cared for graves; had resigned herself, in the course of years, to the creeping on of age: she had wept, and laughed, and been indifferent, mostly indifferent, as is man's way; but now she was going to cease to be, and nothing would please her, or sadden her, or leave her merely cold, again.

She knew what was coming, before anyone else; for she had a presentiment: so, at least, she called it, one grey November afternoon, when, with icy hands outspread, she crouched low over a fire from which she could derive no heat.

That day, while a sharp wind was causing the last, tattered leaves to whirl madly on their stalks, Mary Christina had journeyed to a distant quarter of the town. Her business done, she entered a crowded conveyance. As she sat and let her eyes range over the row of faces opposite her, faces worn with toil, and reddened with exposure to the wind, she said to herself: "My God, how ugly people are!" But, in the same breath, a small, inner voice rebuked her: "Be thankful to be among them, Mary Christina! What, if you were never out-of-doors again?" To which, elliptically, she made answer: "Better now than in spring, when things are freshening up."

Mary Christina was going to die.

That night, the hour being come, she took off for the last time the wrappings in which the world had known her, and, with as little covering as she would ever again need, lay down

between the sheets that witness the incoming and the outgoing of mortals.

But the lying down and folding of the hands is not enough; it is no such easy matter as that to die. The way out of life is as darkly mysterious as the way in.

Thus, after having ever been one of those stoics who look upon illness as a moral failing, to which it is dishonourable to yield; after having borne her casual ailments as mutely as a suffering animal, Mary Christina now began to fling about on her bed, in such a manner that everyone within call was needed to restrain her; and to utter shrill, shameless cries, which echoed through the house. Beads of moisture rolled from her forehead and made round spots on the sheet, or splashed the hands of those who held her.

A stranger, summoned in haste, sat beside her bed. Before him, a scrupulous, womanly reserve dropped like a rent veil.

The well-known faces of her children—children now in the eyes of Mary Christina alone—hung over her. Hand after hand sought hers, sweat-bedewed; and from the lips of the youngest broke man's most human cry: "Oh, mother . . . mother!"

But though these, of all living creatures, had been in Mary Christina's thoughts ever since they had come into the world; though she had watched, night for night, till she knew their eyes closed in sleep, harassed by the fears that only a mother knows; though, up to the last, her love had thrown out a thousand arms, to safeguard them on their divers ways, she was now as indifferent to them as to the several strangers who moved round her bed. And the withdrawal of her warm affection seemed, to those who had been used to shelter beneath it, like the first significant victory gained by death over life.

For Mary Christina, the centre of existence had shifted: henceforth, her desire was only to herself. First came the idolatrous attention demanded by her body—this strong, personable body, still ablaze with energy, and resolutely desirous of living. It was made the object of a religious care; untiring were the endeavours to ward off the inevitable. The minutest variations in the heat of the blood, in the pulsations of the heart, were verified and controlled. Hitherto, she had lived unconscious of her vital functions; now she, too, shared the palpitating interest in their course. For all these things, now of a morbid importance, were possible disarmers of the great enemy, of the griping, gutting pain, to repel which was

her chief concern. This came at intervals. It began somewhere in the distance, far away, drew rapidly nearer, darkening the bed with the shadow of its wings; it hovered over her, circling like a vulture, she lying defenceless and terrified; then, with one swoop, it descended and settled on her, plunging beak and claws into the shuddering flesh. She looked at those about her, with wild eyes, dumbly imploring them, praying to them, as to gods, to shield her from it; but they did nothing. It tore at her, sick and faint with anguish; the muscles of her body twisted into knots; she heard her own shrieks rend the air.

For longer than eight long days she fought this fight, returning time and again to the encounter, in which, each single time, she left more of her strength. Little by little, however, the force of her struggles declined, and the hope that had sustained her, the hope of once coming off conqueror, died out. She still swallowed, with avidity, the bitter draughts that were held to her lips; she submitted, gladly, to the importunate services of the nurse, which broke in, by night and by day, on her hard-won rest; she still gave desperate battle, when the agony sucked at her; but it became a mere blind instinct to live, without faith in the issue.—And the watchers round the bed began to avoid her eyes, in which, at moments, the death-secret was legible.

For eight days and over, she disputed each inch of ground, and those whose lot it was to stand and look on, felt the limits of human endurance strain to breaking-point. Then, however, a change was visible. The pain still wrung her, in savage bouts; but Mary Christina did not answer to it, as at first: her nerves were losing their fine power, both to feel, and to interpret the feeling. She ceased to resist so ardently, let the anguish engirdle her, do its worst. Now that her nerves were drowsier, too, she was able, the moment she ceased to suffer, to sink into repose; a tranquil, twilight state, on the borderland between sleep and waking; and the experiences of a lifetime had numbered no goodlier pleasure than this: the wishless well-being that follows on a vanishing pain.

Her dark hair, fine as silk, was gathered loosely round her head; iced cloths were strapped to her brow; her large, worn hands lay folded on the sheet. The watchers stifled their own flickering hopes, and gave up asking her how she did; for she could hardly bring herself to return a pressure of the hand: all else was immaterial to her, so long as the agony was kept at

bay, and she not roused from her present sweet reprieve. They moved on tip-toe, fearful of disturbing her; for they believed she slept. But she was not asleep—as one saw, who bent more nearly over her: the dark pupils were fixed, beneath the half-fallen lids, like the unclosed eyes of one already dead.

In these benign moments, when her torture slackened, Mary Christina lay and let pictures pass before her—pictures, fragments, flashes—of the life which, until now, had been hers; and, compared with this intensely personal past, which had its rise in mistiest morning memories, even her children seemed unfamiliar to her—the chance associates of an hour.

Fifty years ago! . . . The walls of the room expanded, then fell in, like the sides of a card house. It was a wide and sunny square; before an old-fashioned house with a shiny brass knocker, under a pale blue English sky, heaped with bulbous masses of cloud, a group of children played. One had hair of a light, flaxen colour, which flapped to her waist-line, floated behind her as she ran. She was the wildest and merriest of all; she threw the ball highest; she caught it most surely as it came to earth again. In a spirit of wantonness, elated by her own skill, she threw it so high and so far that it did not return: it had gone over the wall of a neighbouring garden. They were not allowed to enter this garden; the ball, her ball, of which she had been so proud, was lost for ever, and through her own folly. She sat down on the steps, and wept bitterly. Her playfellows, unable to comfort her, stole away . . .

Years had passed. Overhead, a lowering grey sky; which was yet no greyer than the flat stretch of earth beneath. Snow was in waiting, but, so far, only a few detached flakes had fluttered down. On a hard-frozen pond, people were skating: a young girl stood at the edge, and followed their bird-like dartings and skimmings. She wore a scarlet hood on her head. Seen against the prevailing dulness, this hood burnt like a flame. Two young men passed, swinging their skates; one turned to look at her, and she caught an admiring word. He had bright, merry eyes. She reddened; then, obeying an impulse, took to her heels and ran, never pausing till she had crossed the home threshold. Too big for such frolics, they rebuked her; but she only smiled at them in return, not grasping what they said. Her thoughts were singing; life seemed suddenly to mean undreamed-of wonders—the unravelling of a magic coil . . .

And again the years moved forward. It was summer now. The sun went down, huge, flamboyant, in a violet-streaked sky. At the bottom of a tangled old garden, in a thicket of raspberry-bushes, she stood with heaving breast, striving to repress tears of shame and disappointment. Throughout the afternoon, he had seemed to avoid her, had kept at the side of her friend. Now, she made as if she were gathering fruit; but the basket on her arm was empty: she stared unseeingly at the streaky red and gold of the western sky. While she stood thus, a world of bitterness in her young heart, a hand was laid on hers, and a kind voice said: Mary Christina . . . I missed you . . . I came to look for you . . . The little fancy basket dropped from her nerveless fingers, dropped among the bushes, and there it was left, to lie and rot. How foolish of her it had been to forget that basket! It was made of green straw; had a pretty twisted handle. Why had she never gone back to look for it?—what had blotted it from her mind? Did it still lie, where it had fallen—a shapeless, sodden mass? Or had strange hands recovered it? . . . Who lived now in the home of her girlhood? Did other young lips meet beneath the flames of the evening sky? . . . other feet tread the familiar paths, whence hers had for ever passed? . . .

The sick woman stirred uneasily, and moved her head. It was deep night; the house was still, the room sunk in shadow. The darkness oppressed her; she tried to look about her, and moaned. At the sound, a soft-footed Sister of Mercy rose from out a patch of gloom, and bent over her, presenting a cup to her dry lips: as she drank, Mary Christina's fixed and feverish eyes met the stiff white linen of wimple and bands. The draught soothed her; at once her lids half closed again, and the watcher shrank back into the corner from which she had sprung.

Before she had reached it, and sat down again to her beads, Mary Christina seemed to hold a living child in her arms, gathered two tiny feet into the cup-shaped hollow of her hand. A fire burnt in the grate; wine-red curtains were drawn against a night of lashing rain. Out on the highways, and in the storm-swept fields, these icy rain-stripes spelled a shuddering desolation; within, in the safe, warm room, husband and wife knelt to examine each soft line and curve of the miracle that was theirs. —Surely there was no better joy than this joy! . . . See!—how his hand grasps mine! He listens . . . he smiles! Never was such a child born before! . . .

Another turn of the wheel, and the babe was cold to the touch: she stood pressing a little dress to her face, and eating her heart out, with vain regret. How she had struggled, and rebelled! She had then believed that no after-grief could equal this grief for the little dead child, (so long since become one with the earth it lay in); for this faint life-spark, of which all but herself speedily forgot the existence. It had not been so; many a greater grief had overtaken her: with the passing of the years, it sometimes seemed as though sorrow's bowed and grey-veiled form would never again quit her side. She had learned that it is easier to see a child die, unspoiled, than to watch it change, grow hard, betray its soul; had even come to rely on death, as on the fundamental stay of life—the bed-rock, beneath loose and shifting sands.

But after this last precise vision of the waxen babe that awaited her in the land of shadows, the memories came crowding thick and fast; she could not follow each singly to an end. The later years, too, had been so like, one to another; and they had flashed past with a dizzy quickness: one day she had been thirty, and it seemed only on the morrow that she was sixty—an old woman stretched out to face death. With the far-reaching sight granted to dying eyes, she lay and looked back at the confused pattern of her life, as at some richly-worked arras, and surveyed it; but without emotion. Now, the many happenings that composed it struck no answering chord in her; and it passed belief to think that she had once been stirred to the depths of her soul by them. In this hour of profounder knowledge, she saw that they had only been dreams and shadows—delusive images that had tricked her brain. Nothing of them had persisted; nothing been real or lasting: her hand had caught the frayed edge of no perdurable garment. The wonders had been a chimera; the evils, too. And their hold upon her had been an imaginary one: her inmost self, the vitalest part of her, had remained unmoved by them, and unharmed. She had not striven in mortal combat; for there had never been a combat to engage in. That was still another illusion—perhaps the greatest of all. Life, tapped at its core, stripped of its rainbow gauds, meant—she knew it now—a standing dumbly by, to let these dream-things pass. Now that she was done with it, with life and living, and could view it as a whole, she saw that this was what it came to: one was never really of it; it only seemed so, at the moment. One's soul

held aloof, shy, proud, chill, while past it bore an unsubstantial pageant of varying places, and their accompanying ghosts. Sometimes, these shapes held out their arms to us; sometimes, we stretched yearning hands to them. For a brief suspense, there appeared to be an entanglement; then, one or other yielded, and the procession went on as before. Love had no more reality, no more enduring-power, than the lover's arms; the dream-child we reared, changed and passed; joy passed and pain, and the windy excitements of the day.—And memory, turning on the steps of death's threshold, for a last backward glance at the sun-tipped mirage, could impossibly distinguish one transient image from another. Now, they all looked alike; they *were* alike: there had been no real difference between them. Joy and grief, love and hate, rapture and despair, were, in very truth, one and the same—the thin, blue spire of smoke, that ascended from a phantasmal fire.

And having achieved this ultimate wisdom, the dying woman was lapped by a great peace: not again would she choose to be of life. Now, she asked for rest—only rest. Not immortality: no fresh existence, to be endured and fought out in some new shadowland, among unquiet spirits; but deep, deep rest, with the heavy brown earth flattened down above her, and every wish stilled at last. Without substance, without meaning, it had all been an idle beating of the air; but it was over now; and she thanked God that it was so. Never again, the laceration of a sunset, the agony of a fading autumn day! Only sleep; the sleep of nothingness: an eternal forgetting. . .

She lay and let death's torpor steal over her, dimly noting its progress. But towards evening, when the cold blue eastern shadows fell, she made the instinctive effort of the dying: sought to flee the unfleeable, while there was yet time.

"I will get up and go away . . . far away."

She was raised in her bed and propped by loving arms; then laid down again; for she was unable to support the weight of her own body: her head, all a-tremble, sank from side to side, like a top-heavy flower on its stalk.—And the sensation of sinking, of being sucked under by a current she could not stem, began anew. It was as if she were caught and swept round in a whirlpool: for a time she would ride high, on the same level; then came the dizzy, downward drop, and she was by so much nearer to the black, serpent-like, central shaft, so much farther from the blue roof of the sky. Down . . . down . . . down!

—a giddy whirl towards the horrors of the dark; and so it would go on, in ever-contracting circles, till the awful moment when she whirled no more, and when the churning waters met, with a crash of thunder, above her head.

Then, the vertigo ceased, and a merciful weakness came to her aid. Her thoughts, drawing to an inseparable tangle, escaped her, and were reabsorbed in the Supreme Thought, from which they had primarily come forth. Though her eyes remained open, doctor and nurse no longer hushed their voices when they spoke of her: for them, she was already numbered among those mute or inarticulate things, which, because they cannot make protest, are held insensible to hurt and affront.

Life ebbed lingeringly, unwillingly. A muddy pallor overspread her face; her breath came snortingly; the pinched nose strained upwards. But the heart beat on, throbbing through the dead body, till long after midnight.

Then this, too, ceased.

The weeping watchers retired, with the sense of relief in their breasts that accompanies death accomplished; and the withdrawal of their lamentations left a great vacancy in the room. The black-robed woman who remained raked out the embers of the fire, and pushed back the chairs from the bed. On the eyes of the thing that had been Mary Christina, she laid two squares of damped muslin; and, as she did so, she made fervid intercession with the other Mary—the Gracious Namesake of this poor soul that had gone unblessed into the darkness. The coverings decently stretched and folded, she turned out the gas, and set a night-light in a glass of water.—It threw living shadows on the wall.

Two Stories

By Richard Middleton

I—THE NEW BOY

I

When I left home to go to boarding-school for the first time I did not cry like the little boys in the story-books, though I had never been away from home before except to spend holidays with relatives. This was not due to any extraordinary self-control on my part, for I was always ready to shed tears on the most trivial occasion. But as a fact I had other things to think about, and did not in the least realise the significance of my journey. I had lots of new clothes and more money in my pocket than I had ever had before, and in the guard's van at the back of the train there was a large box that I had packed myself with jam and potted meat and cake. In this, as in other matters, I had been aided by the expert advice of a brother who was himself at a school in the North, and it was perhaps natural that in the comfortable security of the holidays he should have given me an almost lyrical account of the joys of life at a boarding-school. Moreover, my existence as a day-boy in London had been so unhappy that I was prepared to welcome any change, so at most I felt only a vague unease as to the future.

After I had glanced at my papers, I sat back and stared at my eldest brother, who had been told off to see me safely to school. At that time I did not like him because he seemed to me unduly insistent on his rights, and I could not help wondering at the tactlessness of the grown-up people in choosing him as my travelling companion. With anyone else this journey might have been a joyous affair, but there were incidents between us that neither of us would forget, so that I could find nothing better than an awkward politeness with which to meet his strained amiability. He feigned an intense interest in his

magazine, while I looked out of window, with one finger in my waistcoat pocket, scratching the comfortable milled edges of my money. When I saw little farmhouses, forgotten in the green dimples of the Kentish hills, I thought that it would be nice to live there with a room full of story-books, away from the discomforts and difficulties of life. Like a cat, I wanted to dream somewhere where I would not be trodden on, somewhere where I would be neglected by friends and foes alike. This was my normal desire, but side by side with my craving for peace I was aware of a new and interesting emotion that suggested the possibility of a life even more agreeable. The excitement of packing my box with provender like a sailor who was going on a long voyage, the unwonted thrill of having a large sum of money concealed about my person, and above all the imaginative yarns of my elder brother, had fired me with the thought of adventure. His stories had been filled with an utter contempt for lessons and a superb defiance of the authorities, and had ranged from desperate rabbit-shooting parties on the Yorkshire Wolds to illicit feasts of Eccles cakes and tinned lobster in moonlit dormitories. I thought that it would be pleasant to experience this romantic kind of life before settling down for good with my dreams.

The train wandered on and my eldest brother and I looked at each other constrainedly. He had already asked me twice whether I had my ticket, and I realised that he could not think of any other neutral remark that fitted the occasion. It occurred to me to say that the train was slow, but I remembered with a glow of anger how he had once rubbed a strawberry in my face because I had taken the liberty of offering it to one of his friends, and I held my peace. I had prayed for his death every night for three weeks after that, and though he was still alive the knowledge of my unconfessed and unrepented wickedness prevented me from being more than conveniently polite. He thought I was a cheeky little toad and I thought he was a bully, so we looked at each other and did not speak. We were both glad, therefore, when the train pulled up at the station that bore the name of my new school.

My first emotion was a keen regret that my parents had not sent me to a place where the sun shone. As we sat in the little omnibus that carried us from the station to the town, with my precious boxes safely stored on the roof, we passed between grey fields whose featureless expanses melted changelessly into the

grey sky overhead. The prospect alarmed me, for it seemed to me that this was not a likely world for adventures; nor was I reassured by the sight of the town, whose one long street of low, old-fashioned houses struck me as being mean and sordid. I was conscious that the place had an unpleasant smell, and I was already driven to thinking of my pocket-money and my play-box, agreeable thoughts which I had made up my mind in the train to reserve carefully for possible hours of unhappiness. But the low roof of the omnibus was like a limit to my imagination, and my body was troubled by the displeasing contact of the velvet cushions. I was still wondering why this made my wrists ache, when the omnibus lurched from the cobbles on to a gravel drive, and I saw the school buildings towering all about me like the walls of a prison. I jumped out and stretched my legs while the driver climbed down to collect the fares. He looked at me without a jot of interest, and I knew that he must have driven a great many boys from the station to the school in the course of his life.

A man appeared in shirt sleeves of grey flannel and wheeled my boxes away on a little truck, and after a while a master came down and showed us, in a perfunctory manner, over the more presentable quarters of the school. My brother was anxious to get away, because he had not been emancipated long enough to find the atmosphere of dormitories and class-rooms agreeable. I was naturally interested in my new environment, but the presence of the master constrained me, and I was afraid to speak in front of this unknown man whom it was my lot to obey, so we were all relieved when our hurried inspection was over. He told me that I was at liberty to do what I pleased till seven o'clock, so I went for a walk through the town with my brother.

The day was drawing to a chill grey close, and the town was filled with a clammy mist tainted with the odour of sewage, due, I afterwards discovered, to the popular abuse of the little stream that gave the place its name. Even my brother could not entirely escape the melancholy influence of the hour and the place, and he was glad to take me into a baker's shop and have tea. By now the illusion of adventure that had reconciled me to leaving home was in a desperate state, and I drank my tea and consumed my cakes without enjoyment. If life was always going to be the same—if in fleeing one misfortune I had merely brought on myself the pain of becoming accustomed to

another—I felt sure that my meagre stoicism would not suffice to carry me through with credit. I had failed once, I would fail again. I looked forward with a sinking heart to a tearful and uncomfortable future.

There was only a very poor train service, so my brother had plenty of time to walk back to the station, and it was settled that I should go part of the way with him. As we walked along the white road, that stretched between uniform hedgerows of a shadowy greyness, I saw that he had something on his mind. In this hour of my trial I was willing to forget the past for the sake of talking for a few minutes yet with some human being whom I knew, but he returned only vague answers to my eager questions. At last he stopped in the middle of the road, and said I had better turn back. I would liked to have walked farther with him, but I was above all things anxious to keep up appearances, so I said Good-bye in as composed a voice as I could find. My brother hesitated for a minute; then with a timid glance at heaven he put his hand in his pocket, pulled out half-a-crown which he gave me, and walked rapidly away. I saw in a flash that for him, too, it had been an important moment; he had tipped his first school-boy, and henceforth he was beyond all question grown up.

I did not like him, but I watched him disappear in the dusk with a desolate heart. At that moment he stood for a great many things that seemed valuable to me, and I would have given much to have been walking by his side with my face towards home and my back turned to the grey and unsavoury town to which I had to bear my despondent loneliness. Nevertheless I stepped out staunchly enough, in order that my mind should take courage from the example of my body. I thought strenuously of my brother's stories, of my play-box packed for a voyage, of the money in my pocket increased now by my eldest brother's unexpected generosity; and by dint of these violent mental exercises I had reduced my mind to a comfortable stupor by the time I reached the school gates. There I was overcome by shyness, and although I saw lights in the form-rooms and heard the voices of boys, I stood awkwardly in the playground, not knowing where I ought to go. The mist in the air surrounded the lights with a halo, and my nostrils were filled with the acrid smell of burning leaves.

I had stood there a quarter of an hour perhaps, when a boy came up and spoke to me, and the sound of his voice gave me a

shock. I think it was the first time in my life a boy had spoken kindly to me. He asked me my name, and told me that it would be supper time in five minutes, so that I could go and sit in the dining-hall and wait. "You'll be all right, you know," he said, as he passed on; "they're not a bad lot of chaps." The revulsion nearly brought on a catastrophe, for the tears rose to my eyes and I gazed after him with a swimming head. I had prepared myself to receive blows and insults with a calm brow, but I had no armour with which to oppose the noble weapons of sympathy and good fellowship. They overcame the stubborn hatred with which I was accustomed to meet life, and left me defenceless. I felt as if I had been face to face with the hero of a dream.

As I sat at supper before a long table decorated with plates of bread-and-butter and cheese I saw my friend sitting at the other end of the room, so I asked the boy next to me to tell me his name. "Oh," he said, looking curiously at my blushes, "you mean old mother F———. He's pious, you know; reads the Bible and funks at games and all that."

There are some things which no self-respecting school-boy can afford to forgive. I had made up my mind that it was not pleasant to be an Ishmael, that as far as possible I would try to be an ordinary boy at my new school. My experiences in London had taught me caution, and I was anxious not to compromise my position at the outset by making an unpopular friend. So I nodded my head sagely in reply, and looked at my new discovered hero with an air of profound contempt.

II

The days that followed were not so uncomfortable as my first grey impression of the place had led me to expect. I proved to my own intense astonishment to be rather good at lessons, so that I got on well with the masters, and the boys were kind enough in their careless way. I had plenty of pocket-money, and though I did not shine at Association football, for in London I had only watched the big boys playing Rugby, I was not afraid of being knocked about, which was all that was expected of a new boy. Most of my embarrassments were due to the sensitiveness that made me dislike asking questions, a weakness that was always placing me in false positions. But

my efforts to make myself agreeable to the boys were not unsuccessful, and while I looked in vain for anything like the romantic adventures of which my brother had spoken, I sometimes found myself almost enjoying my new life.

And then, as the children say in the streets of London, I woke up, and discovered that I was desperately home-sick. Partly no doubt this was due to a natural reaction, but there were other more obvious causes. For one thing my lavish hospitality had exhausted my pocket-money in the first three weeks, and I was ashamed to write home for more so soon. This speedy end to my apparent wealth certainly made it easier for the boys to find out that I was not one of themselves, and they began to look at me askance and leave me out of their conversations. I was made to feel once more that I had been born under a malignant star that did not allow me to speak or act as they did. I had not their common sense, their blunt cheerfulness, their complete lack of sensibility, and while they resented my queerness they could not know how anxious I was to be an ordinary boy. When I saw that they mistrusted me I was too proud to accept the crumbs of their society like poor mother F———, and I withdrew myself into a solitude that gave me far too much time in which to examine my emotions. I found out all the remote corners of the school in which it was possible to be alone, and when the other boys went for walks in the fields, I stayed in the churchyard close to the school, disturbing the sheep in their meditations among the tombstones, and thinking what a long time it would be before I was old enough to die.

Now that the first freshness of my new environment had worn off, I was able to see my life as a series of grey pictures that repeated themselves day by day. In my mind these pictures were marked off from each other by a sound of bells. I woke in the morning in a bed that was like all the other beds, and lay on my back listening to the soft noises of sleep that filled the air with rumours of healthy boys. The bell would ring and the dormitory would break into an uproar, splashing of water, dropping of hairbrushes and shouts of laughter, for these super-boys could laugh before breakfast. Then we all trooped downstairs and I forced myself to drink bad coffee in a room that smelt of herrings. The next bell called us to chapel, and at intervals during the morning other bells called us from one class to another. Dinner was the one square meal

we had during the day, and as it was always very good, and there was nothing morbid about my appetite, I looked forward to it with interest. After dinner we played football. I liked the game well enough, but the atmosphere of mud and forlorn grey fields made me shudder, and as I kept goal I spent my leisure moments in hardening my æsthetic impressions. I never see the word football to-day without recalling the curious sensation caused by the mud drying on my bare knees. After football were other classes, classes in which it was sometimes very hard to keep awake, for the school was old, and the badly-ventilated classrooms were stuffy after the fresh air. Then the bell summoned us to evening chapel and tea, a meal which we were allowed to improve with sardines and eggs and jam, if we had money to buy them or a hamper from home. After tea we had about two hours to ourselves and then came preparation, and supper and bed. Everything was heralded by a bell, and now and again even in the midst of lessons I would hear the church-bell tolling for a funeral.

I think my hatred of bells dated back to my early childhood, when the village church, having only three bells, played the first bar of "Three Blind Mice" a million times every Sunday evening, till I could have cried for monotony and the vexation of the thwarted tune. But at school I had to pay the penalty for my prejudice every hour of the day. Especially I suffered at night during preparation, when they rang the curfew on the church bells at intolerable length, for these were tranquil hours to which I looked forward eagerly. We prepared our lessons for the morrow in the Great Hall, and I would spread my books out on the desk and let my legs dangle from the form in a spirit of contentment for the troubled day happily past. Over my head the gas stars burned quietly, and all about me I heard the restrained breathing of comrades, like a noise of fluttering moths. And then, suddenly, the first stroke of the curfew would snarl through the air, filling the roof with nasal echoes, and troubling the quietude of my mind with insistent vibrations. I derived small satisfaction from cursing William the Conqueror, who, the history book told me, was responsible for this ingenious tyranny. The long pauses between the strokes held me in a state of strained expectancy, until I wanted to howl. I would look about me for sympathy and see the boys at their lessons, and the master on duty reading quietly at his table. The curfew rang every night, and they did not notice it at all.

The only bell I liked to hear was the last bell that called us to our brief supper and to bed, for once the light was out and my body was between the sheets I was free to do what I would, free to think or to dream or to cry. There was no real difference between being in bed at school or anywhere else; and sometimes I would fill the shadows of the dormitory with the familiar furniture of my little bedroom at home, and pretend that I was happy. But as a rule I came to bed brimming over with the day's tears, and I would pull the bed-clothes over my head so that the other boys should not know that I was homesick, and cry until I was sticky with tears and perspiration.

The discipline at school did not make us good boys, but it made us civilised; it taught us to conceal our crimes. And as homesickness was justly regarded as a crime of ingratitude to the authorities and to society in general, I had to restrain my physical weakness during the day, and the reaction from this restraint made my tears at night almost a luxury. My longing for home was founded on trifles, but it was not the less passionate. I hated this life spent in walking on bare boards, and the blank walls and polished forms of the school appeared to me to be sordid. When now and again I went into one of the master's studies and felt a carpet under my feet, and saw a pleasant litter of pipes and novels laying on the table, it seemed to me that I was in a holy place, and I looked at the hearthrug, the wallpaper and the upholstered chairs with a kind of desolate love for things that were nice to see and touch. I suppose that if we had been in a workhouse, a prison, or a lunatic asylum, our æsthetic environment would have been very much the same as it was at school; and afterwards when I went with the cricket and football teams to other grammar schools they all gave me the same impression of clean ugliness. It is not surprising that few boys emerge from their school life with that feeling for colour and form which is common to nearly all children.

There was something very unpleasant to me in the fact that we all washed with the same kind of soap, drank out of the same kind of cup, and in general did the same things at the same time. The school time-table robbed life of all those accidental variations that make it interesting. Our meals, our games, even our hours of freedom seemed only like subtle lessons. We had to eat at a certain hour whether we were hungry or not, we had to play at a certain hour when perhaps we wanted to sit still and

be quiet. The whole school discipline tended to the formation of habits at the expense of our reasoning faculties. Yet the astonishing thing to me was that the boys themselves set up standards of conduct that still further narrowed the possibilities of our life. It was bad form to read too much, to write home except on Sundays, to work outside the appointed hours, to talk to the day-boys, to cultivate social relationships with the masters, to be Cambridge in the boat-race, and in fine to hold any opinion or follow any pursuit that was not approved by the majority. It was only by hiding myself away in corners that I could enjoy any liberty of spirit, and though my thoughts were often cheerless when I remembered the relative freedom of home life, I preferred to linger with them rather than to weary myself in breaking the little laws of a society for which I was in no way fitted.

These were black days, rendered blacker by my morbid fear of the physical weakness that made me liable to cry at any moment, sometimes even without in the least knowing why. I was often on the brink of disaster, but my fear of the boys' ridicule prevented me from publicly disgracing myself. Once the head-master called a boy into his study, and he came out afterwards with red eyelids and a puffed face. When they heard that his mother had died suddenly in India, all the boys thought that these manifestations of sorrow were very creditable, and in the best of taste, especially as he did not let anybody see him crying. For my part I looked at him with a kind of envy, this boy who could flaunt his woe where he would. I, too, had my unassuageable sorrow for the home that was dead to me those forlorn days; but I could only express it among the tombs in the churchyard, or at night, muffled between the blankets, when the silent dormitory seemed to listen with suspicious ears.

III

A consoling scrap of wisdom which unfortunately children do not find written large in their copybooks is that sorrow is as transitory as happiness. Although my childhood was strewn with the memorial wreaths of dead miseries I always had a morbid sense that my present discomforts were immortal. So I had quite made up my mind that I would continue to be unhappy at school, when the intervention of two beings whom

I had thought utterly remote from me, gave me a new philosophy and reconciled me to life. The first was a master, who found me grieving in one of my oubliettes and took me into his study and tried to draw me out. Kindness always made me ineloquent, and as I sat in his big basket chair and sniffed the delightful odour of his pipe, I expressed myself chiefly in woe-begone monosyllables and hiccoughs. Nevertheless he seemed to understand me very well, and though he did not say much, I felt by the way in which he puffed out great, generous clouds of smoke, that he sympathised with me. He told me to come and see him twice a week, and that I was at liberty to read any of his books, and in general gave me a sense that I was unfortunate rather than criminal. This did me good, because a large part of my unhappiness was due to the fact that constant suppression by majorities had robbed me of my self-respect. It is better for a boy to be conceited than to be ashamed of his own nature, and to shudder when he sees his face reflected in a glass.

My second benefactor was nominally a boy, though in reality he was nearly as old as the master, and was leaving at the end of the term to go up to Oxford. He took me by the shoulder one evening in the dusk, and walked me round and round the big clump of rhododendrons that stood in the drive in front of the school. I did not understand half he said, but to my great astonishment I heard him confessing that he had always been unhappy at school, although at the end he was captain in lessons, in games, in everything. I was, of course, highly flattered that this giant should speak to me as an equal, and admit me to his confidences. But I was even more delighted with the encouraging light he threw on school-life. "You're only here for a little spell, you know; you'll be surprised how short it is. And don't be miserable just because you're different. I'm different; it's a jolly good thing to be different." I was not used to people who took this wide view of circumstance, and his voice in the shadows sounded like someone speaking in a story-book. Yet although his monologue gave me an entirely new conception of life, no more of it lingers in my mind, save his last reflective criticism. "All the same, I don't see why you should always have dirty nails." He never confided in me again, and I would have died rather than have reminded him of his kindly indiscretion; but when he passed me in the playground he seemed to look at me with a kind of reticent interest,

and it occurred to me that after all my queerness might not be such a bad thing, might even be something to be proud of.

The value of this discovery to me can hardly be exaggerated. Hitherto in my relationships with the boys I had fought nothing but losing battles, for I had taken it for granted that they were right and I was wrong. But now that I had hit on the astonishing theory that the individual has the right to think for himself, I saw quite clearly that most of their standards of conduct sprang from their sheep-like stupidity. They moved in flocks because they had not the courage to choose a line for themselves. The material result of this new theory of life was to make me enormously conceited, and I moved among my comrades with a mysterious confidence, and gave myself the airs of a Byron in knickerbockers. My unpopularity increased by leaps and bounds but so did my moral courage, and I accepted the belated efforts of my school fellows to knock the intelligence out of me as so many tributes to the force of my individuality. I no longer cried in my bed at night, but lay awake enraptured at the profundity of my thoughts. After years of unquestioning humility I enjoyed a prolonged debauch of intellectual pride, and I marvelled at the little boy of yesterday who had wept because he could not be an imbecile. It was the apotheosis of the ugly duckling, and I saw my swan's plumage reflected in the placid faces of the boys around me, as in the vacant waters of a pool. As yet I did not dream of a moulting season, still less that a day would come when I should envy the ducks their domestic ease and the unthinking tranquillity of their lives. A little boy may be excused for not realising that Hans Andersen's story is only the prelude to a sadder story that he had not the heart to write.

My new freedom of spirit gave me courage to re-examine the emotional and æsthetic values of my environment. I could not persuade myself that I liked the sound of bells, and the greyness of the country in winter-time still revolted me, as though I had not yet forgotten the cheerful reds and greens and blues of the picture-books that filled my mind as a child with dreams of a delightful world. But now that I was wise enough to make the best of my unboyish emotionalism, I began to take pleasure in certain phases of school-life. Though I was devoid of any recognisable religious sense I liked the wide words in the Psalms that we read at night in the school chapel. This was not due to any precocious recognition of their poetry, but to the fact that their intense imagery conjured up all sorts of

precious visions in my mind. I could see the hart panting after the water-brooks, in the valleys of Exmoor, where I had once spent an enchanted holiday. I could see the men going down to the sea in ships, and the stormy waves, and the staggering, fearful mariners, for I had witnessed a great tempest off Flamborough Head. Even such vague phrases as " the hills " gave me an intense joy. I could see them so clearly, those hills, chalky hills covered with wild pansies, and with an all-blue sky overhead, like the lid of a chocolate-box. I liked, too, the services in the old church on Sunday nights, when the lights were lowered for the sermon, and I would put my hands over my ears and hear the voice of the preacher like the drone of a distant bee. After church the choral society used to practise in the Great Hall, and as I walked round the school buildings, snatches of their singing would beat against my face like sudden gusts of wind. When I listened at the doors of my form-room I heard the boys talking about football matches, or indulging their tireless passion for unimaginative personalities; I would stand on the mat outside wondering whether I would be allowed to read if I went in.

I looked forward to Tuesday night, which was my bath-night, almost as much as to Sunday. The school sanitary arrangements were primitive, and all the water had to be fetched in pails, and I used to like to see the man tipping the hot water into the bath and flinging his great body back to avoid the steam that made his grey flannel shirt-sleeves cling to his hairy arms. Most of the boys added a lot of cold water, but I liked to boil myself because the subsequent languor was so pleasant. The matron would bring our own bath towels warm from the fire, and I would press mine against my face because it smelt of childhood and of home. I always thought my body looked pretty after a really hot bath ; its rosiness enabled me to forgive myself for being fat.

One very strong impression was connected with the only master in the school whom I did not like. He was a German, and as is the case with others of his nationality, a spray of saliva flew from his lips when he was angry, and seeing this, I would edge away from him in alarm. Perhaps it was on this account that he treated me with systematic unfairness and set himself the unnecessary task of making me ridiculous in the eyes of the other boys. One night I was wandering in the playground and heard him playing the violin in his study. My

taste in music was barbarian; I liked comic songs, which I used to sing to myself in a lugubrious voice, and in London the plaintive clamour of the street-organs had helped to make my sorrows rhythmical. But now, perhaps for the first time, I became aware of the illimitable melancholy that lies at the heart of all great music. It seemed to me that the German master, the man whom I hated, had shut himself up alone in his study, and was crying aloud. I knew that if he was unhappy, it must be because he too was an Ishmael, a personality, one of the different ones. A great sympathy woke within me and I peeped through the window and saw him playing with his face all shiny with perspiration and a silk handkerchief tucked under his chin. I would have liked to have knocked at his door and told him that I knew all about these things, but I was afraid that he would think me cheeky and splutter in my face.

The next day in his class, I looked at him hopefully, in the light of my new understanding, but it did not seem to make any difference. He only told me to get on with my work.

IV

The term drew to a close, and most of the boys in my form-room ticked off the days on lists, in which the Sundays were written in red ink to show that they did not really count. As time went on they grew more and more boisterous, and wherever I went I heard them telling one another how they were going to spend their holidays. It was surprising to me that these boys who were so ordinary during term-time should lead such adventurous lives in the holidays, and I felt a little envious of their good fortune. They talked of visiting the theatre and foreign-travel in a matter-of-fact way that made me think that perhaps after all my home-life was incomplete. I had never been out of England, and my dramatic knowledge was limited to pantomimes, for which these enthusiastic students of musical comedy expressed a large contempt. Some of them were allowed to shoot with real guns in the holidays, which reminded me of the worst excesses of my brother in Yorkshire. Examining my own life, I had often come to the conclusion that adventures did not exist outside books. But the boys shook this comforting theory with their boastful prophecies, and I thought once more that perhaps it was my misfortune that they did not happen to me. I began to fear that I would find the holidays tame.

There were other considerations that made me look forward to the end of the term with misgiving. Since it had been made plain to me that I was a remarkable boy, I had rather enjoyed my life at school. I had conceived myself as strutting with a measured dignity before a background of the other boys, a background that moved and did not change, like a wind-swept tapestry; but I was quite sure that I would not be allowed to give myself airs at home. It seemed to me that a youngest brother's portion of freedom would compare but poorly with the measure of intellectual liberty that I had secured for myself at school. My brothers were all very well in their way, but I would be expected to take my place in the background and do what I was told. I should miss my sense of being superior to my environment, and my intensely emotional Sundays would no longer divide time into weeks. The more I thought of it, the more I realised that I did not want to go home.

On the last night of the term, when the dormitory had at length become quiet, I considered the whole case dispassionately in my bed. The labour of packing my play-box and writing labels for my luggage had given me a momentary thrill, but for the rest I had moved among my insurgent comrades with a chilled heart. I knew now that I was too greedy of life, that I always thought of the pleasant side of things when they were no longer within my grasp, but at the same time my discontent was not wholly unreasonable. I had learnt more of myself in three months than I had in all my life before, and from being a nervous, hysterical boy I had arrived at a complete understanding of my emotions, which I studied with an almost adult calmness of mind. I knew that in returning to the society of my healthy, boyish brothers, I was going back to a kind of life for which I was no longer fitted. I had changed, but I had the sense to see that it was a change that would not appeal to them, and that in consequence I would have another and harder battle to fight before I was allowed to go my own way.

I saw further still. I saw that after a month at home I would not want to come back to school, and that I should have to endure another period of despondency. I saw that my whole school life would be punctuated by these violent uprootings, that the alternation of term-time and holidays would make it impossible for me to change life into a comfortable habit, and that even to the end of my school-days it would be necessary for me to preserve my new-found courage.

As I lay thinking in the dark I was proud of the clarity of my mind, and glad that I had at last outwitted the tears that had made my childhood so unhappy. I heard the boys breathing softly around me, those wonderful boys who could sleep even when they were excited, and I felt that I was getting the better of them in thinking while they slept. I remembered the prefect who had told me that we were there only for a little spell, but I did not speculate as to what would follow afterwards. All that I had to do was to watch myself ceaselessly, and be able to explain to myself everything that I felt and did. In that way I should always be strong enough to guard my weaknesses from the eyes of the jealous world in which I moved.

The church-bells chimed the hour, and I turned over and went to sleep.

II—A TRAGEDY IN LITTLE

I

Jack, the postmaster's little son, stood in the bow-window of the parlour and watched his mother watering the nasturtiums in the front garden. A certain intensity of purpose was expressed by the manner in which she handled the watering-pot. For though it was a fine afternoon the carrier's man had called over the hedge to say that there would be a thunderstorm during the night, and everyone knew that he never made a mistake about the weather. Nevertheless, Jack's mother watered the plants as if he had not spoken, for it seemed to her that this meteorological gift smacked a little of sorcery and black magic; but in spite of herself she felt sure that there would be a thunderstorm and that her labour was therefore vain, save perhaps as a protest against idle superstition. It was in the same spirit that she carried an umbrella on the brightest summer day.

Jack had been sent indoors because he would get his legs in the way of the watering-pot in order to cool them, so now he had to be content to look on, with his nose pressed so tightly against the pane that from outside it looked like the base of a

sea-anemone growing in a glass tank. He could no longer hear the glad chuckle of the watering-pot when the water ran out, but on the other hand he could write his name on the window with his tongue, which he could not have done if he had been in the garden. Also he had some sweets in his pocket bought with a half-penny stolen from his own money-box, and as the window did not taste very nice he slipped one into his mouth and sucked it with enjoyment. He did not like being in the parlour, because he had to sit there with his best clothes on every Sunday afternoon and read the parish magazine to his sleepy parents. But the front window was lovely, like a picture, and, indeed, he thought that his mother, with the flowers all about her and the red sky overhead, was like a lady on one of the beautiful calendars that the grocer gave away at Christmas. He finished his sweet and started another ; he always meant to suck them right through to make them last longer, but when the sweet was half finished, he invariably crunched it up. His father had done the same thing as a boy.

The room behind him was getting dark, but outside the sky seemed to be growing lighter, and mother still stooped from bed to bed, moving placidly, like a cow. Sometimes she put the watering-pot down on the gravel path, and bent to uproot a microscopic weed or to pull the head off a dead flower. Sometimes she went to the well to get some more water, and then Jack was sorry that he had been shut indoors, for he liked letting the pail down with a run and hearing it bump against the brick sides. Once he tapped upon the window for permission to come out, but mother shook her head vigorously without turning round ; and yet his stockings were hardly wet at all.

Suddenly mother straightened herself, and Jack looked up and saw his father leaning over the gate. He seemed to be making grimaces and Jack made haste to laugh aloud in the empty room, because he knew that he was good at seeing his father's jokes. Indeed it was a funny thing that father should come home early from work and make faces at mother from the road. Mother, too, was willing to join in the fun, for she knelt down among the wet flowers, and as her head drooped lower and lower it looked, for one ecstatic moment, as though she were going to turn head over heels. But she lay quite still on the ground, and father came half-way through the gate, and then turned and ran off down the hill towards the station. Jack stood in the window, clapping his hands and laughing ; it was a strange

game, but not much harder to understand than most of the amusements of the grown-up people.

And then as nothing happened, as mother did not move and father did not come back, Jack grew frightened. The garden was queer and the room was full of darkness, so he beat on the window to change the game. Then, since mother did not shake her head, he ran out into the garden, smiling carefully in case he was being silly. First he went to the gate, but father was quite small far down the road, so he turned back and pulled the sleeve of his mother's dress, to wake her. After a dreadful while mother got up off the ground with her skirt all covered with wet earth. Jack tried to brush it off with his hands and made a mess of it, but she did not seem to notice, looking across the garden with such a desolate face, that when he saw it he burst into tears. For once mother let him cry himself out without seeking to comfort him; when he sniffed dolefully, his nostrils were full of the scent of crushed marigolds. He could not help watching her hands through his tears; it seemed as though they were playing together at cat's-cradle; they were not still for a moment. But it was her face that at once frightened and interested him. One minute it looked smooth and white as if she was very cross, and the next minute it was gathered up in little folds as if she was going to sneeze. Deep down in him something chuckled, and he jumped for fear that the cross part of her had heard it. At intervals during the evening, while mother was getting him his supper, this chuckle returned to him, between unnoticed fits of crying. Once she stood holding a plate in the middle of the room for quite five minutes, and he found it hard to control his mirth. If father had been there they would have had good fun together, teasing mother, but by himself he was not sure of his ground. And father did not come back, and mother did not seem to hear his questions.

He had some tomatoes and rice-pudding for his supper, and as mother left him to help himself to brown sugar he enjoyed it very much, carefully leaving the skin of the rice-pudding to the last, because that was the part he liked best. After supper he sat nodding at the open window, looking out over the plum trees to the sky beyond, where the black clouds were putting out the stars one by one. The garden smelt stuffy, but it was nice to be allowed to sit up when you felt really sleepy. On the whole he felt that it had been a pleasant, exciting sort of day, though once or twice mother had frightened him by looking so

strange. There had been other mysterious days in his life, however; perhaps he was going to have another little dead sister. Presently he discovered that it was delightful to shut your eyes and nod your head and pretend that you were going to sleep; it was like being in a swing that went up and up and never came down again. It was like being in a rowing-boat on the river after a steamer had gone by. It was like lying in a cradle under a lamplit ceiling, a cradle that rocked gently to and fro while mother sang far away songs.

He was still a baby when he woke up, and he slipped off his chair and staggered blindly across the room to his mother, with his knuckles in his eyes like a little, little boy. He climbed into her lap and settled himself down with a grunt of contentment. There was a mutter of thunder in his ears, and he felt great warm drops of rain falling on his face. And into his dreams he carried the dim consciousness that the thunderstorm had begun.

II

The next morning at breakfast time father had not come back, and mother said a lot of things that made Jack feel very uncomfortable. She herself had taught him that anyone who said bad things about his father was wicked, but now it seemed that she was trying to tell him something about father that was not nice. She spoke so slowly that he hardly understood a word she said, though he gathered that father had stolen something, and would be put in prison if he was caught. With a guilty pang he remembered his own dealings with his money-box, and he determined to throw away the rest of the sweets when nobody was looking. Then mother made the astounding statement that he was not to go to school that day, but his sudden joy was checked a little when she said that he was not to go out at all, except into the back garden. It seemed to Jack that he must be ill, but when he made this suggestion to mother, she gave up her explanations with a sigh. Afterwards she kept on saying aloud, "I must think, I must think!" She said it so often that Jack started keeping count on his fingers.

The day went slowly enough, for the garden was wet after the thunderstorm, and mother would not play any games. Just before tea-time two gentlemen called and talked to mother in the parlour, and after a while they sent for Jack to answer

some questions about father, though mother was there all the time. They seemed nice gentlemen, but mother did not ask them to stop to tea, as Jack expected. He thought that perhaps she was sorry that she had not done so, for she was very sad all tea-time, and let him spread his own bread and jam. When tea was over things were very dull, and at last Jack started crying because there was nothing else to do. Presently he heard a little noise and found that mother was crying as well. This seemed to him so extraordinary that he stopped crying to watch her ; the tears ran down her cheeks very quickly, and she kept on wiping them away with her handkerchief, but if she held her handkerchief to her eyes perhaps they would not be able to come out at all. It occurred to him that possibly she was sorry she had said wicked things about father, and to comfort her, for it made him feel fidgety to see her cry, he whispered to her that he would not tell. But she stared at him hopelessly through her red eyelids, and he felt that he had not said the right thing. She called him her poor boy, and yet it appeared that he was not ill. It was all very mysterious and uncomfortable, and it would be a good thing when father came back and everything went on as before, even though he had to go back to school.

Later on the woman from the mill came in to sit with mother. She brought Jack some sweets, but instead of playing with him she burst into tears. She made more noise when she cried than mother ; in fact he was afraid that in a minute he would have to laugh at her snortings, so he went into the parlour and sat there in the dark, eating his sweets, and knitting his brow over the complexities of life. He could see five stars, and there was a light behind the red curtain of the front bedroom at Arber's farm. It was about twelve times as large as a star, and a much prettier colour. By nearly closing his eyes he could see everything double, so that there were ten stars and two red lights ; he was trying to make everything come treble when the gate clicked and he saw his father's shadow. He was delighted with this happy end to a tiresome day, and as he ran through the passage he called out to mother to say that father was back. Mother did not answer, but he heard a bit of noise in the kitchen as he opened the front door.

He said " Good evening " in the grown-up voice that father encouraged, but father slipped in and shut the door without saying a word. Every night when he came back from the

post-office he brought Jack the gummed edgings off the sheets of stamps, and Jack held out his hand for them as a matter of course. Automatically father felt in his overcoat pocket and pulled out a great handful. "Take care of them, they're the last you'll get," he said; but when Jack asked why, his father looked at him with the same hopeless expression that he had found in his mother's eyes a short while before. Jack felt a little cross that everyone should be so stupid.

When they went into the kitchen everybody looked very strange, and Jack sat down in the corner and listened for an explanation. As a rule the conversation of the grown-up people did not amuse him, but to-night he felt that something had happened, and that if he kept quiet he might find out what it was. He had noticed before that when the grown-ups talked they always said the same things over and over again, and now they were worse than usual. Father said "It's no good, I've got to go through it"; the mill-woman said, "Whatever made you do it, George?" And mother said, "Nothing will ever happen to me again!" They all went on saying these things till Jack grew tired of listening, and started plaiting his stamp-paper into a mat. If you did it very neatly it was almost as good as an ordinary sheet of paper by the time you had finished. By-and-by, while he was still at work, the mill-woman brought him his supper on a plate, and raising his head he saw that father and mother were sitting close together, looking at each other, and saying nothing at all. He was very disappointed that although father had come home they had not had any jokes all the evening, and as they were all so dull he did not very much mind being sent to bed when he had finished his supper. When he said Good-night to father, he noticed that his boots were very muddy as if he had walked a long way like a common postman. He made a joke about this, but they all looked at him as if he had said something wrong, so he hurried out of the room, glad to get away from these people whose looks had no reasonable significance, and whose words had no discoverable meaning. It had been a bad day, and he hoped mother would let him go back to school the next morning.

And yet though he took off his clothes and got into bed, the day was not quite over. He had only dozed for a few minutes when he was roused by a noise down below, and slipping out on to the staircase he heard the mill-woman saying Good-night in the passage. When she had gone and the door had banged

behind her, he listened still, and heard his mother crying and his father talking on and on in a strange, hoarse voice. Somehow these incomprehensible sounds made him feel lonely, and he would have liked to have gone downstairs and sat on his mother's lap and blinked drowsily in his father's face, as he had done often enough before. But he was always shy in the presence of strangers, and he felt that he did not know this woman who wept and this man who did not laugh. His father was his play-friend, the sharer of all his fun; his mother was a quiet woman who sat and sewed, and sometimes told them not to be silly, which was the best joke of all. It was not right for people to alter. But the thought of his bedroom made him desolate, and at last he plucked up his courage, and crept downstairs on bare feet. Father and mother had gone back into the kitchen, and he peeped through the crack of the door to see what they were doing. Mother was still crying, always crying, but he had to change his position before he could see father. Then he turned on his heels and ran upstairs trembling with fear and disgust. For father, the man of all the jokes, the man of whom burglars were afraid and compared with whom all other little boys' fathers were as dirt, was crying like a little girl.

He jumped into bed and pulled the bed-clothes over his face to shut out the ugliness of the world.

III

When Jack woke up the next morning he found that the room was full of sunshine, and that father was standing at the end of the bed. The moment Jack opened his eyes, he began telling him something in a serious voice, which was alone sufficient to prevent Jack from understanding what he said. Besides, he used a lot of long words and Jack thought that it was silly to use long words before breakfast, when nobody could be expected to remember what they meant. Father's body neatly fitted the square of the window, and the sunbeams shone in all round it and made it look splendid; and if Jack had not already forgotten the unfortunate impression of the night before, this would have enabled him to overcome it. Every now and then father stopped to ask him if he understood, and he said he did, hoping to find out what it was all about later on. It seemed, however, that father was not going to the post-office any more,

and this caused Jack to picture a series of delightfully amusing days. When father had finished talking he appeared to expect Jack to say something, but Jack contented himself with trying to look interested, for he knew that it was always very stupid of little boys not to understand things they didn't understand. In reality he felt as if he had been listening while his father argued aloud with himself, talking up and down like an earthquake map.

At breakfast they were still subdued, but afterwards, as the morning wore on, father became livelier and helped Jack to build a hut in the back garden. They built it of bean-sticks against the wall at the end, and father broke up a packing-case to get planks for the roof. Only mother still had a sad face, and it made Jack angry with her, that she should be such a spoil-fun. After dinner, while Jack was playing in the hut, Mr. Simmons, of the police-station, and another gentleman called to take father for a walk, and Jack went down to the front to see them off. Jack knew Mr. Simmons very well; he had been to tea with his little boy, but though he thought him a fine sort of man he could not help feeling proud of his father when he saw them side by side. Mr. Simmons looked as if he were ashamed of himself, while father walked along with square shoulders and a high head as if he had just done something splendid. The other gentleman looked like nothing at all beside father.

When they were out of sight Jack went into the house and found mother crying in the kitchen. As he felt more tolerant in his after-dinner mood he tried to cheer her up by telling her how fine father had looked beside the other two men. Mother raised her face, all swollen and spoilt with weeping, and gazed at her son in astonishment. "They are taking him to prison," she wailed, "and God knows what will become of us."

For a moment Jack felt alarmed. Then a thought came to him and he smiled, like a little boy who has just found a new and delightful game. "Never mind, mother," he said; "we'll help him to escape!"

But mother would not stop crying.

The Widow Man

By Eden Phillpotts

As the Japanese, with inherited inspiration, make annual pilgrimage to the shrine of flowers, so here and there in this material land I have known a kindred spirit to regard bud-break, rose-time, or the running flame of the spring gorse as events worthy of observation—as festivals to be seen and celebrated.

I keep many of these trysts with nature in the course of the year, and she suffers me still to be punctual, still to bear witness in the familiar theatres. Yet no year echoes another and the mental standpoint of observation also varies, so that the painter or writer, though he seek a score of times in the self-same haunt, shall repeat no story. Because nature never does so, and it is the criterion of an artist that he echo not himself, any more than the seasons on earth or the clouds in the sky. Nor is this to advocate mean chronicles of fact in any medium; indeed such chronicles might favour repetition, since the data change not; but given the skill to translate observation and mood into the terms of art, then the record will be a new one from every standpoint—a creation born of earth and air, of individual instinct and the spirit that leads the artist forth to seek fair things and achieve an impression of them.

To me there is no greater pageant within the round of my days than the autumn glory of the brake, and no October passes by complete without it.

Hither, then, I come, upon a stage wide enough and deep enough for the manifestation, and from the standpoint of a great hill find the fern reigning over earth for many a mile around me. Grey and nearly naked thorn trees, with granite boulders that shine blue against the fern, throw appreciable blotches of deep shadow into the far-reaching light; even the herbage casts a shade at noon; and where certain sloping woods sink from the sun to the river, heavy passages of darkness are still more widely spread in broad tracts along the tree tops, since each ascending plane of oak or birch casts a curtain of gloom

down upon the crowns of the plane beneath. For the sun is in Scorpio and begins to move along his lower ways.

A quality of richness is thus embroidered into the autumnal tones, and the interwoven shadow serves to enrich the flame and glow of the hour. For in autumn it is not the colour of earth alone, but the angle of the illumination from on high that breeds such opulent pomp. Shadow is flung into the splendour of these brake-clad slopes; darkness is kneaded and knit into the fiery patchwork; a million minute splashes and trickles of pure purple mesh the hills and enhance their splendour by contrast, so that these tracts of throbbing light are like a cloth of red gold laid lavishly on staple of darkness. Yet such splendours are tame in their motionless persistence before those accidental lights and shadows that animate every natural scene and breathe the breath of life into it, for 'accidentals' are as precious in nature as in art. The wind and the cloud are the magic painters of the earth; and it is not only the actual movement of ruffled grasses, glittering leaves or fretted river; it is not only the music that ever plays where things of earth dance to the wind; it is not only the scrawl and heap of shadow flying through this valley and over that hill; it is not only the cloudy sleight to lift distant contours dark against the shining sky, or drown suddenly some effulgent splendour of fern and stone at our feet; but it is also the added value these passing shades and breezes lend the permanent scene disposed around them. For there is no such vitality as the sudden flash of leaping leaves or wind-kissed water wakes in a whole landscape; there is no such iridescent splendour as edges the dark cloud shadow; and the mass of it on one hill will tamper with the tone of the next and vary all the harmonies of a mountain-side until it has swept upon its way.

Here spread slopes of heath and forest mighty enough for these changes, and the largest clouds, drifting before a north wind, were not too great to smother the sunshine. They only broke it and distributed their mingled grey and blue in flying masses that set the light of hills and vales vibrating as they passed.

Forest fell to the river from the southern bank, but the immense pattern of the fern was flung out in red miles upon the further slopes. They faced south and glowed to the fringes of other woods that were sunk very deep in the winding valley. The trees in that remote combe shone with a radiance of orange and cherry, dimmed by distance, and seen from these elevations they looked no greater than the fern around them. Like

brilliant and fiery moss the forest encrusted the hills; it consisted of the rounded heads of countless oaks; and no tall tree rose above its fellow to declare the nature of the thing.

All else harmonised with the brake and submitted its proper colour to the dominant glory flung far over earth. Here indeed were green and scarlet, ebony and silver; petals of radiant cloud, blue of sky; flame light of autumn woods and falling, flying leaves; but the hour belonged to *Pteris aquilina*, the fern of the eagle, the fern of ferns. Its masses now painted the foothills of the Moor with their highest colour splendour, before the latter rain and the earliest snow were come to suck the light out of them, to scatter them and exchange for this rich, red pelt, hugging the bosom of the hills, another garment more threadbare of texture and sober of hue. For November was drawing near, to dim this great light and lower the flame of October's lamp.

Dartmoor spread much broken about me and far beneath, a river ran amid the enfolding woods; but from the receding foreground to the last ragged hem of earth, the brake held court, and glowing through all tones of russet, cinnamon and tawny, auburn, agate and bronze, faded away only upon the farthest hills.

Earth-thrown shadows are darker than any flung from the wings of a cloud; and now below me, through the very heart of the light, deeper and broader as the sun sank upon the west, a purple apparition, a new element not air nor water, dilated through the bottom of the river valley. It lapped along the edge of the red fern and rose and rose to drown the sunset lights.

Hither now I descended, and where certain trees congregated by the river and thrust their silver-coated roots out of a bank above a pool, deep in the purple shadow appeared a man and a child. The man sat and smoked beside the water, and a little boy, playing close at hand, flung stones into the stream and called to his father to watch him. The man was untidy and unshaven. He had a pale, anxious face, thin cheeks and a weak, yellowish moustache; his puzzled eyes were grey. He wore a wisp of black round his neck and a drab billy-cock hat was stuck at the back of his head. His clothes were neutral-tinted and a black band appeared on the left sleeve of his jacket. He sat with one leg thrown over the other, his hands in his breeches pocket. The child appeared to be seven or eight years old, and he, too, wore a little mourning band on his arm.

The widower looked up as I passed, and I bade him "good-evening."

"Evening," he answered, in a thin, lifeless voice. He moved his eyes toward me but not his head, and when I stopped he uncrossed his legs and rose. Irresolution sat upon him; he was a shambling man, with one shoulder above the other, and he turned out his feet as he walked. He seemed less than opaque. One felt that he would hardly cast a shadow.

"A lot of water in the river just now," I said, and he replied with a little sibilant sound that stands in the vernacular for 'yes.'

"Ess—a lot of water in the river sure enough." He looked down at the stream with sudden intentness.

"Sure enough," he said again, after an interval.

"Those birches will be washed away some day," I declared, pointing where the denuded bank revealed their roots.

"Washed away some day."

"What's the new water-bailiff like? A very good man, I hear."

He nodded.

"A very good man."

"One of Merryweather Chugg's sons, they tell me?"

"So he is, then, one of Merryweather Chugg's sons."

"Do you work here?"

He shook his head. He never looked at me, but kept his eyes on the child.

"No, I don't work here. I clear the water-tables and do hedging and ditching. I be down here giving my boy a run. He lost his mother in the spring."

"I'm very sorry for that."

"Very sorry for that," he echoed.

"He's a fine, sturdy, little man—strong as a lion, seemingly."

"Strong as a lion," he repeated in his thin, dreary voice.

"Took after his mother, I expect?"

He considered this suggestion with his eyes on the child.

"Took after his mother? You might say he do, and you might say he don't. I've got another home—a maid. A pinnicking cheel—the daps of me. 'Twas along of childbirth my wife died, and I said out afore everybody that I'd sooner my wife had lived and the babby had died! I said it out afore everybody. Such was my state that I ran about saying it to people I'd never seen afore. There was a talk of shutting me up."

"I'm properly sorry for you—cruel bad fortune. But you've got the girl and boy. They comfort you a lot, no doubt."

"They're very good, obedient childer. Leastways, the boy is. The little girl's along with my mother. There's a question if she'll live. She's the daps of me."

"Good for her to be with your mother."

"Good for her to be with my mother."

He nodded over this thought, as if it were new, then repeated the words in a lower key to himself:

"Good for her to be with my mother."

"I daresay you'll marry again, presently," I ventured; but he shook his head.

"I ban't much addicted to women, for that matter," he said; "I didn't have no luck with my wife."

To this, one could make no answer.

"No luck with my wife," he repeated; "yet you wouldn't believe how properly down-daunted I was about it. I said in my despair—I said afore everybody and the doctor and all—I said I'd rather the babby had died than my wife."

"No doubt you hardly knew what you were saying."

He was silent for a long time, and then, just as I prepared to speak again, he echoed me once more.

"No doubt I hardly knew what I was saying."

"Well, good luck in the future!" I concluded cheerfully, feeling that much sympathy would be wasted on this bird-witted spirit. Then, quite suddenly, without obvious reason, he began to talk—half to himself, half to me.

"I wouldn't be like they farmers that went to Uncle Climo, though. Even if my wife had lived, I'd never have done a thing like them. 'Tis a story they tell to make the people laugh; but when you see the inner meaning, you don't laugh."

Here was interest awakened instantly.

"Please tell me the tale," I begged. "Who was Uncle Climo?"

His flicker of animation subsided, and for a moment his mind appeared to have gone out again.

"Who was Uncle Climo?" he asked. But the repeated question revived him and he prepared to answer it.

"Not that I'd have done so, even if my wife had lived . . ."

He looked at the river; then, in quickened tones, as a child tells a tale, he rehearsed the ancient story:—

"He had an orchard and a wife, Uncle Climo had, and the

wife was the bane of his life, but the orchard was his living. 'Twas a brave, large orchard, and a very famous orchard—so they tell. And Climo had a 'Cheat-the-Boys' tree in his orchard you must know. . . ."

He died away again, and his attention twitched off the subject; but only for a moment.

"A 'Cheat-the-Boys' tree in his orchard he had. 'Tis a very likely apple to the eye, but sour as vinegar—a proper, cruel apple, unless 'tis blended along with others in cider. And 'tis called so because the robber boys will be at it; and they be cheated when they've stole it. No better'n a crab apple, you might say. And one fine night, Mrs. Climo, after many bitter words, went forth and took a halter out of the stable and hanged herself dead on the tree. 'Twas winter time and no apples then. She was quite dead, I must tell you, when they comed to her and cut her down."

"A dreadful thing to happen."

"That's not all. That might have happened to anybody; but, after 'twas all over, no less than seven other married men came to Uncle Climo and axed if he'd be so kind as to give 'em a living slip of the fatal thing. Married men, mind you. And one wretch offered to buy the tree!"

"Ah! That's where the inner meaning of the yarn comes in—eh?"

"That's where the inner meaning comes in," he echoed. He was excited. His puzzled eyes shone; his voice rose.

"And when they laugh at that, I say 'tis a very wicked thing, and no laughing matter—along of the inner meaning. But, of course, everybody don't read it like that. But I wouldn't have axed for a bit of his beastly witch of a tree. No better than doing wife-murder, I call it."

"Be sure there's little truth in the tale—just a joke."

He shook his head.

"'Tis the hidden meaning," he repeated.

So I left the poor moth of a man, with his doubts and solemnities and perilous brainstuff, staring into the twilight hour from his twilight mind. Night would follow sunset and dawn would follow night; but for this frail, defrauded spirit, there promised no dawn; his sole lot was to flutter in the crepuscule a little while until Death should find him and smudge him out. May the negative blessings of the fool abide with him and no inner meanings rise again to plague his innocent heart!

The Handling of Words*

By Vernon Lee

STEVENSON

Donkey in the Cévennes, p. 151. Five hundred words. Nouns and pronouns, 138; verbs, 70; adjectives and adjectival participles, 41.

"All was Sunday bustle in the streets and in the public house, as all had been Sabbath peace among the mountains. There must have been near a score of us at dinner by eleven before noon; and after I had eaten and drunken, and sat writing up my journal, I suppose as many more came dropping in one after another, or by twos and threes. In crossing the *Lozère* I had not only come among new natural features, but moved into the territory of a different race. These people as they hurriedly despatched their viands in an intricate sword-play of knives, questioned and answered me with a degree of intelligence which excelled all that I had met, except among the railway folk at Chasseradès. They had open telling faces, and were lively both in speech and manner. They not only entered thoroughly into the spirit of my little trip, but more than one declared, if he were rich enough, he would like to set forth on such another.

"Even physically there was a pleasant change. I had not seen a pretty woman since I left *Monastier*, and there but one. Now of the three who sat down with me to dinner, one was certainly not beautiful—a poor timid thing of forty, quite troubled at this roaring *table d'hôte*, whom I squired and helped to wine, and pledged and tried generally to encourage, with quite a contrary effect, but the other two, both married, were both more handsome than the average of women. And *Clarisse*? What shall I say of *Clarisse?* She waited at table with a heavy, placable nonchalance, like a performing cow; her great grey eyes were steeped in amorous languor; her features, although fleshy, were of an original and acute design; her

* All rights reserved.

mouth had a curl; her nostril spoke of dainty pride; her cheek fell into strange and interesting lines. It was a face capable of strong emotion, and, with training, it offered the promise of delicate sentiment. It seemed pitiful to see so good a model left to country admirers and a country way of thought. Beauty should at least have touched society; then, in a moment, it throws off a weight that lay upon it, it becomes conscious of itself, it puts on an elegance, learns a gait and a carriage of the head, and, in a moment, *patet dea*. Before I left I assured *Clarisse* of my hearty admiration. She took it like milk, without embarrassment or wonder, merely looking at me steadily with her great eyes; and I own the result upon myself was some confusion. If *Clarisse* could read English, I should not dare to add that her figure was unworthy of her face. Hers was a case for stays; but that may perhaps grow better as she gets up in years.

"*Pont de Montvert*, or *Greenhill Bridge*, as we might say at home, is a place memorable in the story of the Camisards. It was here that the war broke out; here that those southern Covenanters slew their *Archbishop Sharpe*. . . ."

The whole first page gives the sense of ponderation. We have, in close sequence, two sentences of appreciation of circumstances, nay of supposition. The two first sentences are direct affirmations: *All had been Sabbath peace among the mountains. There must have been near a score of us at dinner*, etc.; the reference is to something which is not the writer. In the second half of the second sentence we suddenly double back to Stevenson—"and after I had eaten and drunken," etc.—not for his own sake, however, but merely using him as a sort of fixed point of view whence to see the real object under discourse. Let us continue "as many more came dropping in."—The sliding in here of "I suppose" (when the objective meaning could have been got equally by "*about* as many more") prepares one for a perpetual give and take between the told thing and the teller, very characteristic of Stevenson's mode of exposition.

In the very next sentence—"In crossing the Lozère I had not only come among new natural features," etc.—the *I* returns, the mere statement turns into personal narrative. The last sentence of this paragraph—"They had open telling faces, and not only entered thoroughly into the spirit of my little trip"—sums up this intertwining of the traveller and the journey by the reference to the proper "entering into the spirit

of my little trip."—The whole of this paragraph is active; even in a place where a passive might be expected, Stevenson makes himself the nominative of *supposing*, while the *people* remain nominative of "*dropping in*." The see-saw in the subject-matter is given by a see-saw between nominatives of different parts of the sentence.

Note the direction given to the sentences and half-sentences as indicated by their initial words: "*All; there; and after; I suppose; in crossing; these people; they had; they not only.*"

Let us take the verbs; I fancy we shall find the same variety, but variety coherent and co-ordinated. First, "*all was*"; then, "all *had been*"; this pattern of simple and reduplicated past is continued. "There *must have been*"—"I *had* eaten and drunken"—and this is further complicated by the combination of the simple past and present participles: "*had* eaten, *sat* writing." Again we have the same structure—"In *crossing* the Lozère I *had* not only *come*," etc.—only reversed, the participle coming first, and this time with a complex past "had come."

These changes in tense are, so to speak, *dimensional movements in time*, and their variety and intricacy enlarges it; as variety of movement in space enables us to feel an object as cubic. The next sentence, "these people, as they hurriedly despatched . . . questioned and answered me," etc.—somehow leaves an impression of the *presentness* then, of that past.

In the next paragraph I find no passive form, nor even one of those apparently passive forms, which, from Latin Analogy, we may call *deponent*. "I had not seen a pretty woman since I left Monastier, and there but one. Now, of the three who sat down with me to dinner, one was certainly not beautiful," etc.—At the outset there is a *chassez-croisez* between two nominatives; the accusative *woman* of the first sentence becoming the nominative of the next. Let me note a lapse of grammar—alack, ye pedants!—for we had *woman* in the singular, and now, behold, have "of the three."—But, as I think we should find also in Sterne, this lapse, so far from seeming awkward, has a cavalier grace, as of a hat a little awry. To return to our actives and passives: there is, as we shall see by continuing the quotation, only *one* deponent, and of this the real quality is that of an adjective: "And Clarisse? What shall I say of Clarisse? She waited at table with a heavy, placable nonchalance, like a performing cow; her great grey eyes *were steeped* in amorous languor";—And this apparent deponent breaks agreeably

through the series of active verbs governing more obvious adjectives: "Her features . . . *were*, her mouth *had* a curl; her nostril *spoke* of, etc.; her cheek *fell* into," etc.—All this is not merely variety, it is movement.

Stevenson, by introducing verbs of movement about things which are motionless, supplies that sense of activity which we get from the fact of the person spoken of being in movement (the woman was, remember, waiting at table), and which he could not keep reiterating. I feel certain that writing is largely an art of such substitutions of effect, one set of items being made to furnish an impression required for another. Hence the utter mistakenness of criticising single impressions, as in the case of Carducci's famous *Silenzio verde*, of which pedants repeated, that silence, being unappreciable by the eye, could not be *green;* overlooking that the greenness and the silence produced equivalent impressions, converged, in our consciousness.

Again, let us return to Stevenson: we are now no longer hurrying across provinces, but in a dining-room, looking about us leisurely. And the sentences, hitherto short, have now expanded into much complexity of clause. I would point out that the sudden breaking in with a question which is in reality an interjection (—"And Clarisse? What shall I say of Clarisse?") gives the page not merely a lyrical (or mock lyrical) vivacity, but, by association with certain eighteenth-century forms, a certain gallant affectation, an archaism transforming what would otherwise be mere eyeing of a waitress in a restaurant: 'tis the opening of a bag of graceful, oldworld associations. This little interlude prepares us (being in fact the expression of the already existing attitude in Stevenson) for the order of thought in the next sentence:—"Beauty should at least have touched society; then, in a moment, it throws off a weight that lay upon it; it becomes conscious of itself, it puts on an elegance, learns a gait and a carriage of the head, and in a moment, *patet dea*"—ending with that Virgilian phrase (which also takes us back to the eighteenth century of "And Clarisse?"—so purely literary): *Patet Dea.*

By this time we are just prepared for "If Clarisse could read English, I should not dare to add that her figure was unworthy of her face. Hers was a case for stays, but that may perhaps grow better as she gets up in years."—The sentence —"Hers was a case for stays"—acts, I think, to bring us back to homeliness, and especially to the individual, *narrative* reality.

In examining this whole passage I have passed, continually, from the *form* to the actual *contents;* in literature they are closely intermeshed in the real performance. It is *form* to think in this, and not a different, succession of *subject items;* and it is *realisation* of the subject to produce such forms. Note that we get a consistency and co-ordination in Stevenson's mood (*i.e.*, the subjective subject-matter) exactly answering to the co-ordination in the mere words, as explained before. Let us examine into one or two other points.

The passage thus accidentally selected begins with a deliberate symmetrical repetition: "*All* was Sunday bustle in the streets . . . as *all* had been Sabbath peace upon the mountains."—It is a theme of symmetrical comparison: Sunday—Sabbath; bustle—peace; streets—mountains. But we do not again get any such symmetricological form, at least in the five hundred words under examination; and there is a looser logical tie at the end of the paragraph: "*not only* entered into the spirit of my little trip, *but* more than one declared," etc.—Persistent use of such symmetrical exposition, as we get it in Johnson, Gibbon, and Macaulay, awakens, in a reader at all sensitive, the suspicion of perfunctoriness on the part of the writer, of a curtailing and twisting of facts for easier exhibition; since facts do not exist in this neat form, nor feelings either. Whence the inference that writers, who see or show things in this convenient but mendacious manner must be either pedants or charlatans.

Nothing could be further from Stevenson's practice, but this discourse is nevertheless extraordinarily full of logical forms; loose but not the less effective. In the passage under examination I find a great number of variety of expressions denoting intellectual processes and stimulating them: "I suppose"—"or"—"not only"—"but"—"not only"—"but" (second time)—"Even"—"Now of the"—"other two"—"although"—"It seemed"—"I own." This means that the writer (and the reader also) discriminates, supposes, separates, calculates, compares and draws conclusions. Moreover, the short initial phrase of the second paragraph, "Even physically there was a pleasant change"—is a forestalling of the summing up the reader is going to make, even as the previous paragraph contains a longer forestalling of the same kind. "In crossing the Lozère," etc.—And, although the whole passage is perfectly clear, it is remarkably complicated; full of turns

and superpositions, however frankly and carefully pointed out. So that I can easily imagine that although this degree of logical activity is a pleasure to the intelligent reader, an actual enhancement of the adventurous and fanciful subject-matter, it may represent to the stupid or tired reader an exertion which will make him prefer something " more straight to the point " ;—meaning thereby something vaguely intelligible despite inattention.

Looking at these five hundred words in the spirit of a graphologist, one may generalise as follows : first, great balance —what in the contemporary French pseudo-physiological jargon would be noted as belonging to a *magnifique équilibre ;* second, richness of modalities ; third, steady and lively activity, without ups and downs, promising in moderation and always achieving ; fourth, equally keen perception of outer things and of human temperaments ; fifth, active imagination always returning to the starting point (*vide* Clarisse) ; the same coming back on itself, completion, as regards feeling and logical processes ; sixth, wonderful—I will not say *self-restraint*, but natural discipline, co-ordination of functions. No exaggeration, no watering down ; no false starts, no loose ends. A humane, many-sided, well compacted, singularly active, willing and unegoistic personality : a creature in whose company our soul loves to dwell, because we receive much, and are made to give more than usual.

POSTSCRIPT

The foregoing studies, differing in this form from some of my previous ones, deal with style considered as choice and grouping of words, not with style as conception and exhibition of a subject. I have inquired not among *what remembered images and feelings is the reader made to dwell and move by the writer?* but, *what are the movements which the writer compels the reader to execute in the process of evoking such images and feelings?* For, as I hope these analyses have shown, the thorough realisation of a writer's meaning implies not merely the comprehension of what he is thinking about, but the docile repetition of the rhythm and accent, the hurrying and slackening, the attitudes and modes of his thinking, the mimicry, so to speak, of the pace of suspense, of fulfilled or frustrated expectation, the leapings and haltings of his thought ; and those arts of separating and uniting, of holding asunder, of folding over and merging together,

of proceeding, so to speak, along straight or oblique tracks, seeking the centre of a subject or poising steadily around it, or wandering aimlessly, which are the essential expressions of his individual ways of being. Such imitation of the activities of the artist is the innermost and hidden *modus operandi* of all kinds of art, and thanks to it, principally, can art, by means of its patterns of words, or of lines and bosses, or of sounds, to a certain degree alter by repetition, the paces and manner as well as the direction, of the attention which lends itself to understand, appreciate, or, as we justly express it, to follow the artist's intention.

This influence is, though less apparent, more cogent and definite than that of the subject-matter which the writer deals with. For the subject-matter of a writer, that is to say, *the things he makes the Reader think about*, varies according to the experience and memory of the reader; and is, in reality, never quite the same. What people or places I shall think of at the bidding of Meredith or Stevenson, of Hardy or Henry James, depends upon what people and places I have myself known; and the feelings connected therewith will depend, similarly, with my personal experience: thus, the vision evoked by certain pages of the *Donkey in the Cèvennes* will depend upon the images of mountain travel, the recollection of passes and valleys, of ascents and comings down, with which I am provided. And the feelings I may have towards the heroine of *The Ambassadors* and her love affair, the degree of blame or of sympathy I may give her, will depend not so much upon Henry James's own attitude, as on my personal impression of women of her kind and my personal code towards certain ways of behaving: all Henry James's evident liking for Mme. de Vionnet does not prevent my neighbour, for instance, from identifying her and her proceedings with something decidedly odious, and therefore taking part against her. This is the reason why the same book will strike one reader as clean and bracing, another as muddy and immoral: the groups of evoked images will differ according to the contents of the reader's mind and his habitual ways of thought; a mind sensitive rather to tenderness and humour and tragic passion, and little stocked with equivocal thoughts, will take no offence at what endangers the morals and incurs the blame of other readers of, say, certain plays of Shakespeare. *To the pure all things are pure;* unless indeed the purity amounts to an ignorance and a one-sidedness which are absolutely upset,

made to lose all sense of proportion, driven to nightmare and nausea, by a sudden revelation of the unknown. Be this as it may, the precise subject of a book varies very considerably with its reader; and that is why judgments are so different.

But the way in which an author forces, or attempts to force his reader to think, does not admit of such differences. It is like the measure and pace of a dance (there is profound æsthetical insight in Nietzsche's insistence on *Dancing* in all his descriptions of the Superman's ways); individually you may like or dislike that particular dance, find that it exhilarates and soothes you, or makes you giddy and breathless; you may think it undignified, boring, hustling, or be unable to catch its rhythm; but you cannot substitute something else for it, well or ill, acquiescing delightedly, obeying in weariness or confusion, or refusing point blank, that dance, which the Writer leads his Reader, cannot be any other than it is. I may hate certain ways of employing the present tense, or certain involutions or certain lacks of concordance, but there they are; and my very hatred of them means nothing but my revolt against a particular way of moving and being which does not suit me and to which I am being constrained.

Hence it is that the actual handling of the parts of speech, as distinguished from the handling of the subject-matter, seems to be the very core of all literature; to contain, in its mysterious smallness, the secret of the unaltering interaction of Reader and Writer, the vital problem of all style.

Under Western Eyes*

By Joseph Conrad

PART FOUR III

"You will come in for a moment?" said Natalia Haldin.

I demurred on account of the late hour. "You know Mother likes you so much," she insisted.

"I will just come in to hear how your mother is."

She said, as if to herself, "I don't even know whether she will believe that I could not find Mr. Razumov, since she has taken it into her head that I am concealing something from her. You may be able to persuade her . . ."

"Your mother may mistrust me, too," I observed.

"You! Why? What could you have to conceal from her? You are not a Russian nor a conspirator."

I felt profoundly my European remoteness, and said nothing, but I made up my mind to play my part of helpless spectator to the end. The distant rolling of thunder in the valley of the Rhone was coming nearer to the sleeping town of prosaic virtues and universal hospitality. We crossed the street opposite the great, dark gateway, and Miss Haldin rang at the door of the apartment. It was opened almost instantly, as if the elderly maid had been waiting in the ante-room for our return. Her flat physiognomy had an air of satisfaction. The gentleman was there, she declared, while closing the door.

Neither of us understood. Miss Haldin turned round brusquely to her. "Who?"

"Herr Razumov," she explained.

She had heard enough of our conversation before we left to know why her young mistress was going out. Therefore, when the gentleman gave his name at the door, she admitted him at once.

"No one could have foreseen that," Miss Haldin murmured, with her serious grey eyes fixed upon mine. And, remembering the expression of the young man's face seen not much more than four hours ago, the look as of a haunted somnambulist, I wondered with a sort of awe.

"You asked my mother first?" Miss Haldin inquired of the maid.

"No. I announced the gentleman," she answered, surprised at our troubled faces.

"Still," I said in an undertone, "your mother was prepared."

* Copyright 1911

"Yes. But he has no idea . . ."

It seemed to me she doubted his tact. To her question how long the gentleman had been with her mother, the maid told us that *der Herr* had been in the drawing-room no more than a short quarter of an hour.

She waited a moment, then withdrew, looking a little scared. Miss Haldin gazed at me in silence.

"As things have turned out," I said, "you happen to know exactly what your brother's friend has to tell your mother. And surely after that . . ."

"Yes," said Natalia Haldin slowly. "I only wonder, as I was not there when he came, if it wouldn't be better not to interrupt now."

We remained silent, and I suppose we both strained our ears, but no sound reached us through the closed door. The features of Miss Haldin expressed a painful irresolution; she made a movement as if to go in, but checked herself. She had heard footsteps on the other side of the door. It came open and Razumov, without pausing, stepped out into the ante-room. The fatigue of that day and the struggle with himself had changed him so much that perhaps I would have hesitated to recognise that face which, only a few hours before, when he brushed against me in front of the post office, had been startling enough but quite different. It had been not so livid then, and its eyes not so sombre. They certainly looked more sane now, but there was upon them the shadow of something consciously evil.

I speak of that, because, at first, their glance fell on me, though without any sort of recognition or even comprehension. I was simply in the line of his stare. I don't know if he had heard the bell or expected to see anybody. He was going out, I believe, and I do not think that he saw Miss Haldin till she advanced towards him a step or two. He did not notice the hand she put out.

"It's you, Natalia Victorovna. . . . Perhaps you are surprised . . . at this late hour. But, you see, I remembered our conversations in that garden. I thought really it was your wish that I should—without loss of time . . . so I came. No other reason. Simply to tell . . ."

He spoke with difficulty. I noticed that, and remembered his declaration to the man in the shop that he was going out because he "needed air." If that was his object, then it was clear that he had miserably failed. With downcast eyes and lowered head he made an effort to pick up the strangled phrase.

"To tell what I have heard myself only to-day—to-day . . ."

Through the door he had not closed I had a view of the drawing-room. It was lighted by a shaded lamp—Mrs. Haldin's eyes could not support either gas or electricity. It was a comparatively big room, and in contrast with the strongly lighted ante-room its length was lost in semi-transparent gloom backed by heavy shadows; and on that ground I saw the fine motionless profile of Mrs. Haldin's bloodless face, inclined slightly forward, with a pale hand resting on the arm of the chair.

She did not move. With the window before her she had no longer that attitude suggesting expectation. The blind was down; and outside there was only the night sky harbouring a thunder-cloud, and the town indifferent and hospitable in its cold, almost scornful, toleration—a town of refuge to which all these sorrows and hopes were nothing.

The thought that the real drama of autocracy is not played on the great stage of politics came to me as, fated to be a spectator, I had this other glimpse behind the scenes, something more profound than the words and gestures of the public play. I had the certitude that this mother, after having heard now all that was to be known of her son's fate, refused in her heart to give him up after all. It was more than Rachel's inconsolable mourning, it was something deeper, more inaccessible in its frightful tranquillity. Lost in the ill-defined mass of the high-backed chair, her attitude suggested the contemplation of something in her lap, as though a beloved head were resting there.

I had this glimpse behind the scenes, and then Miss Haldin, passing by the young man, shut the door. It was not done without hesitation. For a moment I thought that she would go to her mother, but she sent in only an anxious glance. Perhaps if Mrs. Haldin had moved . . . but no. There was in the immobility of that white face the dreadful aloofness of suffering without remedy.

Meantime the young man kept his eyes fixed on the floor. The necessity to repeat the story he had told already was intolerable to him. He had expected to find the two women together. And then, he had said to himself, it would be over for all time—for all time. "It's lucky I don't believe in another world," he had thought cynically.

Alone in his room he had regained a certain measure of composure by writing in his secret diary. He was aware of the danger of that strange self-indulgence. He alludes to it himself, but he could not refrain. It calmed him—it reconciled him to his existence. He sat there scribbling by the light of a solitary candle till it occurred to him that having heard the explanation of Haldin's arrest, as put forward by Sophia Antonovna, it behoved him to tell these ladies himself. They were certain to hear the tale through some other channel, and then his abstention would look strange, not only to the mother and sister of Haldin, but to other people also. Having come to this conclusion he did not discover in himself any marked reluctance to face the necessity, and very soon an anxiety to be done with it began to torment him. He looked at his watch. No; it was not absolutely too late.

The fifteen minutes with Mrs. Haldin, that white face, that weak, distinct voice, that head, at first turned to him eagerly, then, after a while, bowed again and motionless—in the dim still light of the room—had troubled him like some strange discovery. And there seemed to be a secret obstinacy in that sorrow, something he could not understand; at any rate, something he had not expected. Was it hostile? But it did not matter. Nothing could touch him

now; in the eyes of the revolutionists there was now no shadow on his past. The phantom of Haldin had been indeed walked over, was left behind lying powerless and passive on the pavement covered with snow. And this was the phantom's mother consumed with grief and white as a ghost. He had felt a pitying surprise. But that, of course, was of no importance. Mothers did not matter. He could not shake off the poignant impression of that silent, quiet, white-haired woman, but a sort of sternness crept into his thoughts. These were the consequences. Well, what of it? "Am I then on a bed of roses?" he had exclaimed to himself, sitting at some distance with his eyes fixed upon that figure of sorrow. He had said all he had to say to her, and when he had finished she had not uttered a word. She had turned away her head while he was speaking. The silence which had fallen on his last words had lasted for five minutes or more. What did it mean? Before its incomprehensible character Razumov became conscious of anger in his stern mood, the old anger against Haldin reawakened by the contemplation of Haldin's mother. And was it not something like enviousness which gripped his heart, as if of a privilege denied to him alone of all the men that had ever passed through this world? It was the other who had attained to repose and yet continued to exist in the affection of that mourning old woman, in the thoughts of all these people posing for lovers of humanity. It was impossible to get rid of him. "It's myself that I have given up to destruction," thought Razumov. "He has induced me to do it. I can't shake him off."

Alarmed by that discovery he got up and strode out of the silent, dim room with its silent old woman in the chair, that mother! He never looked back. It was frankly a flight. But on opening the door he saw his retreat cut off. There was the sister. He had never forgotten the sister, only he had not expected to see her then—or ever any more perhaps. Her presence in the ante-room was as unforeseen as the apparition of her brother had been. Razumov gave a start as though he had discovered himself cleverly trapped. He tried to smile, but could not manage it, and lowered his eyes. "Must I repeat that silly story now?" he asked himself, and felt a sinking sensation. Nothing solid had passed his lips since the day before, but he was not in a state to analyse the origins of his weakness. He meant to take up his hat and depart with as few words as possible, but Miss Haldin's swift movement to shut the door took him by surprise. He half-turned after her but without raising his eyes, passively, just as a feather might stir in the disturbed air. The next moment she was back in the place she had started from, with another half-turn on his part, so that they came again into the same relative positions.

"Yes, yes," she said hurriedly. "I am very grateful to you, Kirylo Sidorovitch, for coming at once—like this. . . . Only I wish I had . . . Did Mother tell you?"

"I wonder what she could have told me that I did not know before,"

he said, obviously to himself, but perfectly audible. "Because I *did* know it," he added louder. "I always knew it."

He raised his head then. He had such a strong sense of Natalia Haldin's presence that to look at her he felt would be a relief. The ante-room contained a row of hooks on the wall nearest to the outer door; against the wall opposite there stood a small dark table and one chair. The paper, bearing a very faint design, was all but white. The light of an electric bulb high up under the ceiling searched that clear square box into its four bare corners, crudely, without shadows—a strange stage for an obscure drama.

"What do you mean?" asked Miss Haldin. "What is it that you knew always?"

He raised to her his face, pale, full of unexpressed suffering. But that look in his eyes of a dull absent obstinacy, which struck and surprised everybody he was talking to, began to pass away. It was as though he were coming to himself in the awakened consciousness of that marvellous harmony of feature, of lines, of glances, of voice, which made of the girl before him a being so rare, outside, and, as it were, above the common notion of beauty. He looked at her so long that she coloured slightly.

"What is it that you knew?" she repeated vaguely.

That time he managed a smile.

"Indeed, if it had not been for a word of greeting or two, I would doubt whether your mother is aware at all of my existence. You understand."

Natalia Haldin nodded; her hands moved slightly by her side.

"Yes. Is it not heart-breaking? She has not shed a tear yet—not a single tear. . . ."

"Not a tear! And you, Natalia Victorovna? You have been able to cry?"

"I have. And then I am young enough, Kirylo Sidorovitch, to believe in the future. But when I see my mother so terribly distracted, I almost forget everything. I ask myself whether one should feel proud—or only resigned. We had such a lot of people coming to see us. There were utter strangers who wrote asking for permission to call to present their respects. It was impossible to keep our door shut for ever. You know Peter Ivanovitch himself . . . Oh yes, there was much sympathy, but there were persons who exulted openly at that death. Then, when I was left alone with poor Mother, all this seemed so wrong in spirit, something not worth the price she is paying for it. But directly I heard you were here in Geneva, Kirylo Sidorovitch, I felt that you were the only person who could assist me . . ."

"In comforting a bereaved mother? Yes!" he broke in in a manner which made her open her clear unsuspecting eyes. "But there is a question of fitness. Has this occurred to you?"

The breathlessness of his utterance contrasted with the monstrous hint of mockery in his intention.

"Why!" whispered Natalia Haldin with feeling. "Who more fit than you?"

He had a convulsive movement of exasperation, but controlled himself.

"Indeed! Directly you heard I was in Geneva, before even seeing me? It is another proof of that confidence which . . ."

All at once his tone changed, became more incisive and more detached.

"Men are poor creatures, Natalia Victorovna. They have no intuition of sentiment. In order to speak fittingly to a mother of her lost son one must have had some experience of the filial relation. It is not the case with me—if you must know the whole truth. Your hopes have to deal here with 'a breast unwarmed by any affection,' as the poet says. . . . That does not mean it is insensible," he added in a lower tone.

"I am certain your heart is not unfeeling," said Miss Haldin softly.

"No. It is not as hard as a stone," he went on in the same introspective voice, and looking as if his heart were lying as heavy as a stone in that unwarmed breast of which he spoke. "No, not so hard. But how to prove what you give me credit for—ah, that's another question. No one has ever expected such a thing from me before. No one whom my tenderness would have been of any use to. And now you come. You! Now! No, Natalia Victorovna. It's too late. You come too late. You must expect nothing from me."

She recoiled from him a little, though he had made no movement, no gesture, but as if she had seen some change in his face, charging his words with the significance of some hidden sentiment they shared together. To me, the silent spectator, they looked in a moment of sudden insight like two people becoming conscious of a spell which had been lying on them ever since they first set eyes on each other. Had either of them cast a glance, then, in my direction, I would have opened the door quietly and gone out. But neither did; and I remained, every fear of indiscretion lost in the sense of my enormous remoteness from their captivity within the sombre horizon of Russian problems, the boundary of their eyes, of their feelings, the prison of their souls.

Frank, courageous, Miss Haldin controlled her voice in the midst of her slight trouble.

"What can this mean?" she asked as if speaking to herself.

"It may mean that you have given yourself up to vain imaginings while I have managed to remain amongst the truth of things and the realities of life—our Russian life—such as they are."

"They are cruel," she murmured.

"And ugly. Don't forget that—and ugly. Look where you like. Look near you, here abroad where you are, and then look back at home, whence you came."

"You must look beyond the present." Her tone had an ardent conviction.

"The blind can do that best. I have had the misfortune to be born

clear-eyed. And if you only knew what strange things I have seen! What amazing and unexpected apparitions . . . But why talk of all this!"

"On the contrary, I want to talk of all this with you," she protested with grave ardour. The sombre humours of her brother's friend left her unaffected, as though that bitterness, that suppressed anger, were the signs of an indignant rectitude. He was not an ordinary man. She did not want him to be other than he appeared to her trustful eyes. "Yes, with you especially," she insisted. "With you of all the Russian people in the world. . . ." A faint smile dwelt for a moment on her lips. "I am like poor Mother in a way. I, too, seem unable to give up our beloved dead, who, don't forget, was all in all to us. I don't want to abuse your sympathy; but you must understand that it is in you that we can find all that is left of his generous soul."

I was looking at him; not a muscle of his face moved in the least. And yet, even at the time, I did not suspect him of insensibility. It was a sort of rapt expression. Then he stirred slightly.

"You are going, Kirylo Sidorovitch?" she asked.

"I! going? Where? Oh yes, but I must tell you first . . ." His voice was muffled and he forced himself to produce it with visible repugnance, as if speech were something disgusting or deadly. "That story, you know—the story I heard this afternoon. . . ."

"I know the story already," she said sadly.

"You know it! Have you correspondents in Petersburg, too?"

"No. It's Sophia Antonovna. I have seen her just now. She sends you her greetings. She is going away to-morrow."

He had lowered at last his fascinated glance; she, too, was looking down, and standing thus before each other in the glaring light, between the four bare walls, they seemed brought out from the confused immensity of the Eastern borders to be exposed cruelly to the observation of my Western eyes. And I observed them. There was nothing else to do. My existence seemed so utterly forgotten by these two that I dared not now make a movement. And I thought to myself that, of course, they had to come together, the sister and the friend of that dead man. The ideas, the hopes, the aspirations, the cause of Freedom, expressed in their common affection for Victor Haldin, the moral victim of autocracy—all this must draw them to each other fatally. Her very ignorance and his loneliness must work to that end. And, indeed, I saw that the work was done already. Of course. The period of reserve was over; he was coming forward in his own way. I could not mistake the significance of this late visit, for in what he had to say there was nothing urgent. The true cause dawned upon me: he needed her—whether he understood it or not—and she perhaps was moved by the same feeling. It was the second time that I saw them together, and I knew that next time I would not be there, either remembered or forgotten. I would have virtually ceased to exist for both these young people.

I made this discovery in a very few moments. Meantime, Natalia Haldin was telling Razumov briefly of our peregrinations from one end of Geneva to the other. While speaking she raised her hands above her head to untie her veil, and that movement displayed for an instant the grace of her youthful figure, clad in the simplest of mourning. In the transparent shadow the hat rim threw on her face her grey eyes had an enticing lustre. Her voice, with its unfeminine yet exquisite timbre, was steady, and she spoke quickly, frank, unembarrassed. As she justified her action by the mental state of her mother, a spasm of pain marred the generously confiding harmony of her features. I perceived that with his downcast eyes he had the air of a man who is listening to a strain of music rather than to articulated speech. And in the same way, after she had ceased, he seemed to listen yet, motionless, as if under the spell of suggestive sound. He came to himself muttering:

"Yes, yes. She has not shed a tear. She did not seem to hear what I was saying. I might have told her anything. She looked as if no longer belonging to this world."

Miss Haldin gave signs of profound distress. Her voice faltered. "You don't know how bad it has come to be. She expects now to *see him!*" The veil dropped from her fingers and she clasped her hands in anguish. "It shall end by her seeing him," she cried.

Razumov raised his head sharply and attached on her a prolonged thoughtful glance.

"H'm. That's very possible," he muttered in a peculiar tone, as if giving his opinion on a matter of fact. "I wonder what . . ." He checked himself.

"That would be the end. Her mind shall be gone then and her spirit will follow."

Miss Haldin unclasped her hands and let them fall by her side.

"You think so?" he queried profoundly. Miss Haldin's lips were slightly parted. Something unexpected and unfathomable in that young man's character had fascinated her from the first. "No! There's neither truth nor consolation to be got from the phantoms of the dead," he added after a weighty pause. "I might have told her something true; for instance, that your brother meant to save his life—to escape. There can be no doubt of that. But I did not."

"You did not! But why?"

"I don't know. Other thoughts came into my head," he answered. He seemed to me to be watching himself inwardly, as though he were trying to count his own heart-beats, while his eyes never for a moment left the face of the girl. "You were not there," he continued. "I had made up my mind never to see you again."

This seemed to take her breath away for a moment.

"You . . . How is it possible?"

"You may well ask. . . . However, I think that I refrained from telling your mother from prudence. I might have assured her

that in the last conversation he held as a free man he mentioned you both. . . ."

"That last conversation was with you," she struck in her deep moving voice. "Some day you must . . ."

"It was with me. Of you he said that you had trustful eyes. And why I have not been able to forget that phrase I don't know. It meant that there is in you no guile, no deception, no falsehood, no suspicion—nothing in your heart that could give you a conception of a living, acting, speaking lie, if ever it came in your way. That you are a predestined victim. . . . Ha! . . . What a devilish suggestion!"

The convulsive uncontrolled tone of the last words disclosed the precarious hold he had over himself. It was like a man defying his own dizziness in high places and tottering suddenly on the very edge of the precipice. Miss Haldin pressed her hand to her breast. The dropped black veil lay on the floor between them. Her movement steadied him. He looked intently on that hand till it descended slowly and then raised again his eyes to her face. But he did not give her time to speak.

"No? You don't understand? Very well." He had recovered his calm by a miracle of will. "So you talked with Sophia Antonovna?"

"Yes, Sophia Antonovna told me . . ." Miss Haldin stopped, wonder growing in her wide eyes.

"H'm. That's the respectable enemy," he muttered as though he were alone.

"The tone of her references to you was extremely friendly," remarked Miss Haldin, after waiting for a while.

"Is that your impression? And she the most intelligent of the lot, too. Things then are going as well as possible. Everything conspires to . . . Ah! These conspirators," he said slowly with an accent of scorn; "they would get hold of you in no time! You know, Natalia Victorovna, I have the greatest difficulty in saving myself from the superstition of an active Providence. It's irresistible. . . . The alternative, of course, would be the personal Devil of our simple ancestors. But, if so, he has overdone it altogether—the old father of lies—our national patron—our domestic god, whom we take with us when we go abroad. He has overdone it. It seems that I am not simple enough. . . . That's it! I ought to have known. . . . And I did know it," he added in a tone of poignant distress which overcame my astonishment.

"This man is deranged," I said to myself, very much frightened.

The next moment he gave me a very special impression beyond the range of commonplace definitions. It was as though he had stabbed himself outside and had come in there to show it. That was the impression, rendered in physical terms. One could not defend oneself from a certain amount of pity. But it was for Miss Haldin, already so tried in her deepest affections, that I felt a serious concern. Her attitude, her face, expressed compassion struggling with doubt on the verge of terror.

"What is it, Kirylo Sidorovitch?" There was a hint of tenderness in that cry. He only stared at her in that complete surrender of all his faculties which in a happy lover would have had the name of ecstasy.

"Why are you looking at me like this, Kirylo Sidorovitch? I have approached you frankly. I need at this time to see clearly in myself. . . ." She ceased for a moment as if to give him an opportunity to utter at last some word worthy of her exalted trust in her brother's friend. His silence became impressive, like a sign of some momentous resolution.

In the end Miss Haldin went on, appealingly:

"I have waited for you anxiously. But now that you have been moved to come to us in your kindness, you alarm me. You speak obscurely. It seems as if you were keeping back something from me."

"Tell me, Natalia Victorovna," he was heard at last in a strange unringing voice, "whom did you see in that place?"

She was startled, as if deceived in her expectations.

"Where? In Peter Ivanovitch's rooms? There was Mr. Laspara and three other people."

"Ha! The vanguard—the forlorn hope of the great plot," he commented to himself. "Bearers of the spark to start an explosion which is meant to change fundamentally the lives of so many millions in order that Peter Ivanovitch should be the head of a State."

"You are testing me," she said. "Our dear one told me once to remember that men serve always something greater than themselves—the idea."

"Our dear one," he repeated slowly. The effort he made to appear unmoved absorbed all the force of his soul. He stood before her like a being with hardly a breath of life. His eyes, even as under great physical suffering, had lost all their fire. "Ah! your brother . . . But on your lips, in your voice, it sounds . . . and indeed in you everything is divine . . . I wish I could know the innermost depths of your thoughts, of your feelings."

"But why, Kirylo Sidorovitch?" she cried, alarmed by these words coming out of strangely lifeless lips.

"Have no fear. It is not to betray you. So you went there. . . . And Sophia Antonovna, what did she tell you then?"

"She said very little, really. She knew that I should hear everything from you. She had no time for more than a few words." Miss Haldin's voice dropped and she became silent for a moment. "The man it appears has taken his life," she said sadly.

"Tell me, Natalia Victorovna," he asked after a pause, "do you believe in remorse?"

"What a question!"

"What can *you* know of it?" he muttered thickly. "It is not for such as you. . . . What I meant to ask was whether you believed in the efficacy of remorse?"

She hesitated as though she had not understood, then her face lighted up.

"Yes," she said firmly.

"So he is absolved. Moreover, that Ziemianitch was a brute—a drunken brute."

A shudder passed through Natalia Haldin.

"But a man of the people," Razumov went on, "to whom they, the revolutionists, tell a tale of sublime hopes. Well, the people must be forgiven. . . . And you must not believe all you've heard from that source, either," he added, with a sort of sinister reluctance.

"You are concealing something from me," she exclaimed.

"Do you, Natalia Victorovna, believe in the duty of revenge?"

"Listen, Kirylo Sidorovitch. I believe that the future shall be merciful to us all. Revolutionist and reactionary, victim and executioner, betrayer and betrayed, they shall all be pitied together when the light breaks on our black sky at last. Pitied and forgotten; for without that there can be no union and no love."

"I hear. No revenge for you, then? Never? Not the least bit?" He smiled bitterly with his colourless lips. "You yourself are like the very spirit of that merciful future. Strange that it does not make it easier. . . . No! But suppose that the real betrayer of your brother—Ziemianitch had a part in it too, but insignificant and quite involuntary—suppose that he was a young man, educated, an intellectual worker, thoughtful, a man your brother might have trusted lightly, perhaps, but still—suppose . . . But there's a whole story there."

"And you know the story! But why, then——"

"I have heard it. There is a staircase in it, and even phantoms, but that does not matter if a man always serves something greater than himself—the idea. I wonder who is the greatest victim in that tale."

"In that tale!" Miss Haldin repeated. She seemed turned into stone.

"Do you know why I came to you? It is simply because there is no one anywhere in the whole great world I could go to. Do you understand what I say? No one to go to. Do you conceive the desolation of the thought—no one—to—go—to?"

Misled by her own enthusiastic interpretation of two lines in the letter of a visionary, what she was conscious of was the obscure form of his suffering. She was on the point of extending her hand to him impulsively when he spoke again.

"An hour after I saw you first I knew how it would be. The terrors of remorse, revenge, confession, anger, hate, fear, are like nothing to the atrocious temptation which you put in my way the day you appeared before me with your voice, with your face, in the garden of that accursed villa."

She looked utterly bewildered for a moment; then, with a sort of despairing insight, she went straight to the point.

"The story, Kirylo Sidorovitch, the story!"

"There is no more to tell!" He made a movement forward, and she actually put her hand on his shoulder to push him away, but her strength

failed her, and he kept his ground, though trembling in every limb. "It ends here—on this very spot." He pressed a denunciatory finger to his breast with force, and became perfectly still. I ran forward, snatching up the chair, and was in time to catch hold of Miss Haldin and lower her down. As she sank into it she swung half-round on my arm, and remained averted from us both, drooping over the back. Razumov looked down at her with horrible expressionless tranquillity. Incredulity, struggling with astonishment, anger, and disgust, deprived me of speech for a time. Then I turned on him, whispering from very rage—

"This is monstrous. What are you staying for? Don't let her catch sight of you again. Go away. . . ." He did not budge. "Don't you understand that your presence is intolerable—even to me. You've behaved atrociously. If there's any sense of shame in you . . . "

Slowly his big head, his sullen eyes, moved in my direction. "How did this old man come here?" he muttered, astounded.

Suddenly Miss Haldin sprang up from the chair, made a few steps, and tottered. Forgetting my indignation, and even the man himself, I hurried to her assistance. I took her by the arm, and she let me lead her into the drawing-room. Away from the lamp, in the deeper dusk of the distant end, the profile of Mrs. Haldin, her hands, her whole figure had the stillness of a sombre painting. Miss Haldin stopped, leaning on my arm, and without a word pointed mournfully at the tragic immobility of her mother, who seemed to watch a beloved head lying in her lap.

That gesture had an unequalled force of expression, so far-reaching in its human distress, that one could not believe that it pointed out merely the ruthless working of political institutions. After assisting Miss Haldin to the sofa I turned round to go back and shut the door. Framed in the opening, in the searching glare of the white ante-room, my eyes fell on Razumov, still there, standing before the empty chair, as if rooted for ever to the spot of his atrocious confession. A wonder came over me that the mysterious force which had torn it out of him had failed to destroy his life, to shatter his body. It was there unscathed. I could see the broad line of his shoulders, his dark head, the amazing immobility of his limbs. On the floor near his feet lay the veil dropped by Miss Haldin intensely black in the white crudity of the light. He was gazing down at it spell-bound. Next moment, stooping with an incredible, savage swiftness, he snatched it up and pressed it to his face with both hands. Something, extreme astonishment perhaps, dimmed my eyes, so that he seemed to vanish before he moved.

The slamming of the outer door restored my sight, and I went on contemplating the empty chair in the empty ante-room. The meaning of what I had seen reached my mind with a staggering shock. I seized Natalia Haldin by the shoulder.

"That miserable wretch has carried off your veil!" I cried, in the scared, deadened voice of an awful discovery. "He . . ."

The rest remained unspoken. I stepped back and looked at her, in silent horror. Her hands were lying lifelessly, palms upwards on her lap. She raised her grey eyes slowly. Shadows seemed to come and go in them as if the steady flame of her soul had been made to vacillate at last in the cross-currents of poisoned air from the corrupted dark immensity claiming her for its own, where virtues themselves fester into crimes in the cynicism of oppression and revolt.

"It is impossible to be more unhappy. . . ." The languid whisper of her voice struck me with dismay. "No! It is impossible . . . I feel my heart becoming like ice."

IV

Razumov walked straight home on the wet glistening pavement. A heavy shower passed over him; distant lightning played faintly against the fronts of the dumb houses with the shuttered shops all along the Rue de Carouge; and now and then after the faint flash, there was a faint sleepy rumble; but the main forces of the thunderstorm remained massed down the Rhone valley as if loath to attack the respectable and passionless abode of democratic liberty, the serious-minded town of dreary hotels, tendering the same indifferent, secretly scornful, hospitality to tourists of all nations and to international conspirators of every shade.

The owner of the shop was making ready to close when Razumov entered and without a word extended his hand for the key of his room. On reaching it for him, from a shelf, the man was about to pass a small joke as to taking the air in a thunderstorm, but, after looking at the face of his lodger, he only observed, just to say something:

"You've got very wet."

"Yes. I am washed clean," muttered Razumov, who was dripping from head to foot, and passed through the inner door towards the staircase leading to his room.

He did not change his clothes, but, after lighting a candle, took off his watch and chain, laid them on the table, and sat down at once to write. The book of his compromising record was kept in a locked drawer, which he pulled out violently, and did not even trouble to push back afterwards.

In this queer pedantism of a man who had read, thought, lived, pen in hand, there is the sincerity of the attempt to grapple by the same means with another, profounder, knowledge. After some passages which have been already made use of in the building-up of this narrative, or add nothing new to the psychological side of this disclosure (there is even one more allusion to the silver medal in this last entry) comes a page and a half of incoherent writing where his expression is baffled by the novelty and the mysteriousness of that side of our emotional life to which his solitary existence had been a stranger. Then only he begins to address directly the reader he had in his mind, trying to express in broken

sentences full of wonder and awe, the sovereign (he uses that very word) power of her person over his imagination, in which lay the dormant seed of her brother's words.

". . . The most trustful eyes in the world—he said of you when he was as well as a dead man already. And when you stood before me with your hand extended, I remembered the very sound of his voice; and I looked into your eyes—and that was enough! I knew that something had happened, but I did not know then what . . . But don't be deceived, Natalia Victorovna. I believed that I had in my breast nothing but an inexhaustible fund of anger and hate for you both. I remembered that he had looked to you for the perpetuation of his visionary soul; he, this man, who had robbed me of my hard-working, purposeful existence. I, too, had my guiding idea; and remember that amongst us, it is more difficult to lead a life of toil and self-denial than to go out in the street and kill from conviction. But enough of that. Hate or no hate, I felt at once that, while shunning the sight of you, I could never succeed in driving away your image. I would say, addressing that dead man:—'Is this the way you are going to haunt me?' It is only later on that I understood—only to-day, only a few hours ago. What could I have known of what was tearing me to pieces and dragging the secret for ever to my lips? You were appointed to undo the evil by making me betray myself back into truth and peace. You! And you have done it in the same way, too, in which he ruined me: by forcing upon me your confidence. Only what I detested him for, in you ended by appearing noble and exalted. But, I repeat, be not deceived. I was given up to evil. I exulted in having induced that silly innocent fool to steal his father's money. He was a fool, but not a thief. I made him one. It was necessary. I had to confirm myself in my contempt and hate for what I betrayed. I have suffered from as many vipers in my heart as any social democrat of them all: vanity, ambitions, jealousies, shameful desires, evil passions of envy and revenge. I had my security stolen from me, years of good work, my best hopes. Listen—now comes the true confession. The other was nothing. To save me, your trustful eyes had to entice my thought to the very edge of the blackest treachery. I could see them constantly looking at me with the confidence of your pure heart that had not been touched by evil things. Victor Haldin had stolen the truth of my life from me. I had nothing else in the world. He boasted of living on through you on this earth where I had no place to lay my head on. She will marry some day, he had said. And do you know what I said to myself? I shall steal his sister's soul from her. When we met that first morning in the gardens, and you spoke to me confidingly in the generosity of your spirit, I was thinking:—'Yes, he himself by talking of her trustful eyes has delivered her into my hands!' If you could have looked then into my heart, you would have cried out with terror and disgust.

"Perhaps no one will believe the baseness of such an intention to be possible. It's certain that, when we parted that morning, I gloated over

it. I brooded upon the best way. The old man you introduced me to insisted on walking with me. I don't know who he is. He talked of you, of your lonely, helpless state, and every word of that friend of yours was egging me on to the unpardonable sin of stealing a soul. Could he have been the Devil in the shape of an old Englishman? Natalia Victorovna, I was possessed! I returned to look at you every day, and drink in your presence the poison of my infamous purpose. But I foresaw difficulties. Then, Sophia Antonovna, of whom I was not thinking—I had forgotten her existence—appears suddenly with that tale from St. Petersburg . . . The only thing needed to make me safe—a trusted revolutionist forever.

"It was as if Ziemianitch had hanged himself to help me on to further crime. The strength of falsehood seemed irresistible. These people stood doomed by the folly and the illusion that was in them—they being themselves the slaves of lies. Natalia Victorovna, I embraced the might of falsehood, I exulted in it—I gave myself up to it for a time. Who could have resisted? You yourself were the price of it. I sat alone in my room, planning a life, the very thought of which makes me shudder now, like a believer tempted to an atrocious sacrilege. But I brooded ardently over its images. The only thing was that there seemed to be no air in it. And also I was afraid of your mother. I never knew mine. I've never known any kind of love. There is something in the mere word . . . Of you, I was not afraid—forgive me for telling you this. No, not of you. You were truth itself. You could not suspect me. As to your mother, you yourself feared already that her mind had given way from grief. Who could believe anything against me? Had not Ziemianitch hanged himself from remorse? I said to myself: 'Let's put it to the test, and be done with it once for all.' I trembled when I went in; but your mother hardly listened to what I was saying to her, and, in a little while, seemed to have forgotten my very existence. I sat looking at her. There was no longer anything between you and me. You were defenceless—and soon, very soon, you would be alone . . . I thought of you. Defenceless. For days you have talked with me—opening your heart. I remembered the shadow of your eyelashes over your grey trustful eyes. And your pure forehead! It is low like the forehead of statues—calm, unstained. It was as if your pure brow bore a light which fell on me, searched my heart, and saved me from ignominy, from ultimate undoing. And it saved you too. Pardon my presumption. But there was that in your glances which seemed to tell me that you . . .

"Your light! Your truth! I felt that I must tell you that I had ended by loving you. And to tell you that I must first confess. Confess—go out—and perish.

"Suddenly you stood before me! You alone in all the world to whom I must confess. You fascinated me—you have freed me from the blindness of anger and hate—the truth shining in you drew the truth out of me. Now I have done it; and as I write here, I am in the depths of anguish; but there is air to breathe at last—air! And, by the bye, that old

Englishman sprang up from somewhere as I was speaking to you, and raged at me like a disappointed devil. I suffer horribly, but I am not in despair. There is only one more thing to do for me. After that—if they let me—I shall go away and bury myself in obscure misery. In giving Victor Haldin up, it was myself, after all, whom I have betrayed most basely. You must believe what I say now; you can't refuse to believe this. Most basely. It is through you that I came to feel this so deeply. After all it is they and not I who have the right on their side! Theirs is the strength of invisible powers. So be it. Only don't be deceived, Natalia Victorovna, I am not converted. Have I then the soul of a slave? No! I am independent! And therefore perdition is my lot."

On these words, he stopped writing, shut the book, and wrapped it in the black veil he had carried off. He then ransacked the drawers for paper and string, made up a parcel which he addressed to Miss Haldin, Boulevard des Philosophes, and then flung the pen away from him into a distant corner.

This done, he sat down with the watch before him. He could have gone out at once, but the hour had not struck yet. The hour would be midnight. There was no reason for that choice except that the facts and the words of a certain evening in his past were timing his conduct in the present. The sudden power Natalia Haldin had gained over him he ascribed to the same cause. "You don't walk with impunity over a phantom's breast," he heard himself mutter. "Thus he saves me," he thought suddenly. "He himself, the betrayed man." The vivid image of Miss Haldin seemed to stand by him, watching him relentlessly. She was not disturbing. He had done with life, and his thought even in her presence tried to take an impartial survey. Now his scorn extended to himself. "I had neither the simplicity, nor the courage, nor the self-possession to be a scoundrel—or an exceptionally able man. For who, with us in Russia, is to tell a scoundrel from an exceptionally able man . . ."

He was the puppet of his past; because at the very stroke of midnight, he jumped up and ran swiftly downstairs as if confident that, by the power of destiny, the house door would fly open before the absolute necessity of his errand. And as a matter of fact, just as he got to the bottom of the stairs, it was opened for him by some people of the house coming home late—two men and a woman. He slipped out into the street, swept then by a fitful gust of wind. They were, of course, very much startled. A flash of lightning enabled them to observe him walking away quickly. One of the men shouted, and was starting in pursuit, but the woman had recognised him. "It's all right; it's only that young Russian from the third floor." The darkness returned with a single clap of thunder, like a gun fired for a warning of his escape from the prison of lies.

He must have heard at some time or other and now remembered unconsciously that there was to be a gathering of revolutionists at the house of Julius Laspara that evening. At any rate, he made straight for the

Laspara house, and found himself without surprise ringing at its street door, which, of course, was closed. By that time, the thunderstorm had attacked in earnest. The steep incline of the street ran with water; the thick fall of rain enveloped him like a luminous veil in the play of lightning. He was perfectly calm, and, between the crashes, listened attentively to the delicate tinkling of the door-bell somewhere within the house.

There was some difficulty before he was admitted. His person was not known to that one of the guests who had volunteered to go downstairs and see what was the matter. Razumov argued with him patiently. There could be no harm in admitting a caller. He had something to communicate to the company upstairs.

"Something of importance?"

"That'll be for the hearers to judge."

"Urgent?"

"Without a moment's delay."

Meantime one of the Laspara daughters descended the stairs, small lamp in hand, in a light but grimy and crumpled gown, which seemed to hang on her by a miracle, and looking more than ever like an old doll with a dusty brown wig, dragged from under a sofa. She recognised Razumov at once.

"How do you do? Of course you may come in."

Following her light, Razumov climbed two flights of stairs from the lower darkness. Leaving the lamp on a bracket on the landing, she opened a door, and went in, accompanied by the sceptical guest. Razumov entered last. He closed the door behind him, and stepping on one side, put his back against the wall.

The three little rooms, "en suite" with low, smoky ceilings and lit by paraffin lamps, were crammed with people. Loud talking was going on in all three, and tea-glasses, full, half-full and empty stood everywhere, even on the floor. The other dingy Laspara girl sat dishevelled and languid behind an enormous samovar. In the inner doorway, Razumov had a glimpse of the protuberance of a large stomach which he recognised. Only a few feet from him, Julius Laspara was getting down hurriedly from his high stool.

The appearance of the midnight visitor caused no small sensation. Laspara is very summary in his version of that night's happenings. After some words of greeting, disregarded by Razumov, Laspara (ignoring purposely his guest's soaked condition and his extraordinary manner of presenting himself) mentioned something about writing an article. He was growing uneasy, and Razumov appeared absent-minded. "I have written already all I shall ever write," he said at last, with a little laugh.

The whole company's attention was rivetted on the newcomer, dripping with water, deadly pale and keeping his position against the wall. Razumov put Laspara gently aside, as though he wished to be seen from head to foot by everybody. By then the buzz of conversations had died down completely, even in the most distant of the three rooms. The doorway

facing Razumov became blocked by men and women, who craned their necks and certainly seemed to expect something startling to happen.

A squeaky, insolent declaration was heard from that group.

"I know this ridiculously conceited individual."

"What individual?" asked Razumov, raising his bowed head, and searching with his eyes all the eyes fixed on him. An intense, surprised, silence lasted for a time. "If it's me . . ."

He stopped thinking over the form of his confession—and found it suddenly, unavoidably, suggested by the fateful evening of his life.

"I am come here," he began, in a clear voice, "to talk of an individual called Ziemianitch. Sophia Antonovna has informed me that she would make public a certain letter from Petersburg . . ."

"Sophia Ivanovna has left us early in the evening," said Laspara. "It's quite correct. Everybody here . . ."

"Very well," Razumov interrupted, with a shade of impatience, for his heart was beating strongly. Then, mastering his voice so far that there was even a taint of irony in his forcible enunciation:

"In justice to that individual, the much ill-used peasant, Ziemianitch, I now declare solemnly that the conclusions of that letter calumniate a man of the people—a bright Russian soul. Ziemianitch had nothing to do with the actual arrest of Victor Haldin."

Razumov dwelt on the name heavily, and then waited till the faint mournful murmur which greeted it had died out.

"Victor Victorovitch Haldin," he began again, "acting with noble-minded imprudence, took refuge with a certain student of whose opinions he knew nothing but what his own illusions suggested to his generous heart. It was an unwise display of confidence. But I am not here to appreciate the actions of Victor Haldin. Am I to tell you of the feelings of that student, sought out in his obscure solitude, and menaced by the complicity forced upon him? Am I to tell you what he did? It's rather a complicated story. In the end, he went to General T—— himself, and said: 'I have the man who killed P—— locked up in my room. Victor Haldin—a student.'"

A great buzz arose, in which Razumov raised his voice:

"Observe—that man had certain honest ideals in view. But I didn't come here to explain him."

"No. But you must explain how you know all this," came in grave tones from somebody.

"A vile coward!" This simple cry vibrated with indignation. "Name him," shouted other voices.

"What are you clamouring for?" said Razumov, disdainfully, in the profound silence which fell on the raising of his hand. "Haven't you all understood that I am that man."

Laspara went away brusquely from his side, and climbed upon his stool. In the first forward surge of people, Razumov expected to be torn to pieces, but they fell back without touching him, and nothing

came of it but noise. It was bewildering. His head ached terribly. In the confused uproar he made out several times the name of Peter Ivanovitch, the word: "Judgment," and the phrase, "But this is a confession," uttered by somebody in a desperate shriek. In the midst of the tumult, a young man, younger than himself, approached him with blazing eyes:

"I must beg you," he said, with venomous politeness, "to be good enough not to move from this spot till you are told what you are to do."

Razumov shrugged his shoulders.

"I came in voluntarily."

"Maybe. But you won't go out till you are permitted," retorted the other.

He beckoned with his hand, calling out, "Louisa! Louisa! Come here, please," and presently one of the Laspara girls (they had been staring at Razumov from behind the samovar) came along, trailing a bedraggled tail of dirty flounces and dragging with her a chair which she set against the door, and, sitting down on it, crossed her legs. The young man thanked her effusively, and rejoined a group carrying on an animated discussion in low tones. Razumov lost himself for a moment.

A squeaky voice screamed: "Confession or no confession, you are a police spy."

The revolutionist Nikita had pushed his way in front of Razumov, and faced him with his big livid cheeks, his heavy paunch, bull neck and enormous hands. Razumov looked at the famous slayer of gendarmes in silent disgust.

"And what are you?" he said, very low; then shut his eyes, and rested the back of his head against the wall.

"It would be better for you to depart, now," Razumov heard a mild, sad voice, and opened his eyes. The gentle speaker was an elderly man with a great brush of fine hair making a silvery halo all round his keen, intelligent face. "Peter Ivanovitch shall be informed of your confession —and you shall be directed . . ."

Then, turning to Nikita, nicknamed Necator, standing by, he appealed to him in a murmur:

"What else can we do? His sincerity apart, he cannot be dangerous any longer."

The other muttered, "Better make sure of that before we let him go. Leave that to me. I know how to deal with such gentlemen."

He exchanged meaning glances with two or three men who nodded slightly, then turning roughly to Razumov—"You've heard? You are not wanted here. Why don't you get out?"

The Laspara girl on guard rose, and pulled the chair out of the way unemotionally. She gave a sleepy stare to Razumov, who started, looked round the room and passed slowly by her. Then, as if struck by some sudden thought—

"I beg you to observe," he said, already on the landing, "that I

had only to hold my tongue. To-day of all days, since I came amongst you, I was made safe—and to-day I have made myself free from falsehood, from remorse—independent of every single human being on this earth."

He turned his back on the room, and walked towards the stairs; but at the violent crash of the door behind him he looked over his shoulder, and saw that Nikita, with three others, had followed him out. "They are going to kill me after all," he thought.

Before he had time to turn and confront them fairly they had set on him, with a rush. He was driven violently against the wall. "I wonder how," he completed his thought. Nikita said, with a shrill laugh, right in his face, "We shall make you harmless. You wait a bit."

Razumov did not struggle. The three men held him pinned against the wall, while Nikita, taking up a position a little on one side, deliberately swung off his enormous arm. Razumov, looking for a knife in his hand, saw it come at him open, unarmed, and received a tremendous blow on the side of his head over his ear. At the same time, he heard a faint, dull detonating sound, as if someone had fired a pistol on the other side of the wall. A raging fury awoke in him at this outrage. The people in Laspara's rooms holding their breath, listened to the desperate scuffling of four men, all over the landing: thuds against the walls, a terrible crash against the very door—then a fall, as if they had all gone down together with a violence which seemed to shake the whole house. Razumov, overpowered, breathless, crushed under the weight of his assailants, saw the monstrous Nikita squatting on his heels near his head, while the others held him down, kneeling on his chest, gripping his throat, lying across his legs.

"Turn his face the other way," the paunchy terrorist directed, in an excited gleeful squeak.

Razumov could struggle no longer. He was exhausted—and had to watch passively the heavy open hand of the brute swing off and descend again in a degrading blow over his other ear. It seemed to split his head in two—and all at once, the men, holding him, became perfectly silent—soundless as shadows. In silence they pulled him brutally to his feet, rushed him noiselessly down the staircase, and, opening the door, flung him headlong into the street.

He fell on his face, and at once rolled over and over helplessly, going down the short slope together with the rush of running rain water. He came to a rest in the roadway of the street at the bottom, lying on his back, with a great flash of lightning in his eyes; a vivid, silent flash of lightning which blinded him utterly. He picked himself up, and put his arm over his eyes to recover his sight. Not a sound reached him from anywhere, and he began to walk staggering down a long empty street. The lightning waved and darted round him its silent flames; the water of the deluge fell, ran, leaped, drove, noiseless like the drift of mist. In this unearthly stillness, his footsteps fell silent on the pavement, while

a dumb wind drove him on and on, like a lost mortal in a phantom world ravaged by a soundless thunderstorm. God only knows where his noiseless feet took him to that night, here and there, and back again without pause or rest. Of one place, at least, where they did lead him, we heard afterwards; and, in the morning, the driver of the first south-shore tramcar, clanging his bell desperately, saw a bedraggled, soaked man without a hat, walking in the roadway unsteadily with his head down, step right in front of his car, and go under.

When they picked him up, with two broken limbs and a crushed side, Razumov had not lost consciousness. It was as though he had tumbled, smashing himself, into a world of mutes. Silent men, moving unheard, lifted him up, laid him on the side-walk, gesticulating and grimacing round him their alarm, horror, and compassion. A red face with moustaches stooped close over him, lips moving, eyes rolling. Razumov tried hard to understand the reason of this dumb show. To those who stood around him, the features of that stranger so grievously hurt, seemed composed in meditation.

Afterwards his eyes sent out at them a look of fear, and closed slowly. They stared. Razumov made an effort to remember some French words.

"*Je suis sourd*," he had time to utter feebly, before he lost consciousness.

"Deaf," they said to each other. "That's why he did not hear the car."

They carried him off in that same car. Before it started on its journey, a woman in a shabby black dress, who had run out of the iron gate of some private grounds up the road, clambered on to the rear platform, and would not be put off.

"I am a relation," she protested, in bad French. "This young man is a Russian, and I am his relation."

On this plea they let her have her way. She sat down calmly, and took his head on her lap. Her scared faded eyes avoided looking at his deathlike face. At the corner of a street, on the other side of the town, a stretcher met the car. She followed it to the door of the hospital, where they let her come in and see him laid on a bed. Razumov's new-found relation never shed a tear, but the officials had some difficulty in inducing her to go away. The porter observed her lingering on the opposite pavement for a long time. Suddenly, as though she had remembered something, she ran off.

The ardent hater of all Finance Ministers, the slave of Mme. de S——, had made up her mind to offer her resignation as lady companion to the Egeria of Peter Ivanovitch. She had found work to do after her heart.

But hours before, while the thunderstorm still raged, there had been in the rooms of Julius Laspara a great sensation. The terrible Nikita, coming from the landing, uplifted his squeaky voice in horrible glee before all the company:

"Razumov! Mr. Razumov! The wonderful man! Well, he shall

never be any use as a spy to anyone. He won't talk because he shall never hear anything in his life. Not a thing. I have burst the drums of his ears. O! you may trust me. I know the trick. He! He! He! I know the trick."

V

It was nearly a week after her mother's funeral that I saw Natalia Haldin for the last time.

In those silent, sombre days, the doors of the appartement on the Boulevard des Philosophes were closed to everyone but myself. I believe I was of some use, if only in this, that I alone was aware of the incredible part of the situation. Miss Haldin nursed her mother alone to the last moment. If Razumov's visit had anything to do with Mrs. Haldin's end (and I cannot help thinking that it hastened it considerably) it is because the man trusted impulsively by the ill-fated Victor Haldin, had failed to gain the confidence of Victor Haldin's mother. What tale, precisely, he told her cannot be known—at any rate I do not know it—but to me she seemed to die from the shock of an ultimate disappointment borne in silence. She had not believed him. Perhaps she could no longer believe anyone and consequently had nothing to say to anyone—not even to her daughter. I suspect that Miss Haldin lived the heaviest hours of her life by that silent deathbed. I confess I was angry with the broken-hearted old woman passing away in the obstinacy of her mute distrust of her daughter.

When it was all over I stood aside. Miss Haldin had her compatriots round her then. A great number of them attended the funeral. I was there too, but afterwards managed to keep away from Miss Haldin, till I received a short note rewarding my self-denial. "It is as you would have it. I am going back to Russia at once. My mind is made up. Come and see me."

Verily, it was a reward of discretion. I went without delay to receive it. The appartement of the Boulevard des Philosophes presented the dreary signs of impending abandonment. It looked desolate and as if already empty, to my eyes.

Standing, we exchanged a few words, about her health, mine; remarks as to some people of the Russian colony; and then Natalia Haldin, establishing me on the sofa, began to talk openly of her future work, of her plans. It was all to be as I had wished it. And it was to be for life. We should never see each other again. Never!

I gathered this reward to my breast. Natalia Haldin looked matured by her open and secret experiences. With her arms folded she walked up and down the whole length of the room, talking slowly, smooth-browed, with a resolute profile. She gave me a new view of herself, and I marvelled at that something grave and measured in her voice, in her movements, in her manner. It was the perfection of collected independence. The

strength of her nature had come to the surface because the obscure depths had been stirred.

"We two can talk of it now," she observed, after a silence, and stopping short before me. "Have you been to inquire at the hospital lately?"

"Yes, I have." And as she looked at me fixedly—"He shall live, the doctors say. But I thought that Tekla . . ."

"Tekla has not been near me for several days," explained Miss Haldin, quickly. "As I never offered to go to the hospital with her, she thinks that I have no heart. She is disillusioned about me."

And Miss Haldin smiled faintly.

"Yes. She sits with him as long and as often as they will let her," I said. "She says she must never abandon him; never as long as she lives. He'll need somebody—a hopeless cripple, and stone deaf with that."

"Stone deaf? I didn't know," murmured Natalia Haldin.

"He is—it seems strange. I am told there were no apparent injuries to the head. They say too that it is not very likely that he will live long for Tekla to take care of him."

Miss Haldin shook her head.

"While there are travellers ready to fall by the way our Tekla shall never be idle. She is a good Samaritan by an irresistible vocation. The revolutionists didn't understand her. Fancy a devoted creature like that being employed to carry about documents sewn in her dress or made to write from dictation."

"There is not much perspicacity in the world."

No sooner uttered I regretted that observation. Natalia Haldin, looking me straight in the face, assented by a slight movement of her head. She was not offended, but turning away began to pace the room again. To my western eyes she seemed to be getting further and further from me, quite beyond my reach now, but undiminished in the increasing distance. I remained silent as though it were hopeless to raise my voice. The sound of hers so close to me, made me start a little.

"Tekla saw him picked up after the accident? The good soul never explained to me really how it came about. She affirms that there was some understanding between them—some sort of compact—that in any sore need, in misfortune, or difficulty, or pain, he was to come to her."

"Was there?" I said. "It is lucky for him that there was then. He'll need all the devotion of the good Samaritan."

It was a fact that Tekla, looking out of her window at five in the morning, for some reason or other, had beheld Razumov in the grounds of the Chateau Borel, standing stock still, bareheaded in the rain, at the foot of the terrace. She had screamed out to him, by name, to know what was the matter. He never even raised his head. By the time she had dressed herself sufficiently to run downstairs he was gone. She started in pursuit, and rushing out into the road, came almost directly upon the arrested tramcar and the small knot of people picking up Razumov. That much Tekla had told me herself one afternoon we happened to meet at

the door of the hospital, and without any kind of comment. But I did not want to meditate very long on the inwardness of this peculiar episode.

"Yes, Natalia Victorovna, he shall need somebody when they dismiss him, on crutches and stone deaf, from the hospital. But I do not think that when he rushed like an escaped madman into the grounds of the Chateau Borel, it was to seek the help of that good Tekla."

"No!" said Natalia, stopping short before me. "Perhaps not." She sat down and leaned her head on her hand thoughtfully.

The silence lasted for several minutes. During that time I remembered the evening of his atrocious confession—the plaint she seemed to have hardly enough life left in her to utter: "It is impossible to be more unhappy . . ." The recollection would have given me a shudder if I had not been lost in wonder at her force and her tranquillity. There was no longer any Natalia Haldin, because she had completely ceased to think of herself. It was a great victory, a characteristically Russian exploit in self-suppression.

She recalled me to myself by getting up suddenly like a person who has come to a decision. She walked to the writing table, now stripped of all the small objects associated with her by daily use—a mere piece of dead furniture; but it contained something living, still, since she took from a recess a flat parcel which she brought to me.

"It's a book," she said rather abruptly. "It was sent to me. I told you nothing at the time, but now I've decided to leave it with you. I have the right to do that. It was sent to me. It is mine. You may preserve it, or destroy it after you have read it. And while you read it, please remember that I *was* defenceless. And that he . . ."

"Defenceless!" I repeated, surprised, looking hard at her.

"You'll find the very word written there," she whispered. "Well it's true! I *was* defenceless. But perhaps you were able to see that for yourself . . ."

Her face coloured, then went deadly pale.

"In justice to the man, I want you to remember that I was. Oh! I was, I was!"

I rose, a little shaky.

"I am not likely to forget anything you say at this our final parting."

Her hand fell into mine.

"It's difficult to believe that it must be good-bye with us."

She returned my pressure and our hands separated.

"Yes. I am leaving here to-morrow. My eyes are open at last and my hands are free. As for the rest, which of us can fail to hear the stifled cry of our great distress. It may be nothing to the world . . ."

"The world is more conscious of our discordant voices," I said. "It is the way of the world."

"Yes." She bowed her head in assent, and hesitated for a moment. "I must own to you that I am still thinking of the day when all discord shall be silenced. Just imagine! The tempest of blows and of execrations

is over. All is still; the new sun is rising, and the weary men united at last, taking count in their conscience of the ended contest, feel saddened by their victory because so many ideas have perished for the triumph of one, so many beliefs have abandoned them without support. They feel alone on the earth and gather close together. Yes, there must be many bitter hours! But at last the anguish of hearts shall be extinguished in love."

And on this last word of her wisdom, a word so sweet, so bitter, so cruel sometimes, I said good-bye to Natalia Haldin. It is hard to think I shall never look any more into the trustful eyes of that girl—wedded to an invincible belief in the advent of loving concord springing like a heavenly flower from the soil of men's earth, soaked in blood, torn by struggles, watered with tears.

* * * * * * * *

It must be understood that at that time I didn't know anything of Mr. Razumov's confession to the assembled revolutionists. Natalia Haldin might have guessed what was the "one thing more" which remained for him to do; but this my western eyes had failed to see.

Tekla, the ex-lady companion of Mme. de S—— haunted his bedside at the hospital. We met once or twice at the door of that establishment, but on these occasions she was not communicative. She gave me news of Mr. Razumov as concisely as possible. He was making a slow recovery, but would remain a hopeless cripple all his life. Personally, I never went near him: I never saw him again, after the awful evening when I stood by, a watchful but ignored spectator of his scene with Miss Haldin. He was in due course discharged from the hospital, and his "relative"—so I was told—had carried him off somewhere.

My information was completed nearly two years later. The opportunity certainly was not of my seeking; it was quite accidentally that I met a much trusted woman revolutionist at the house of a distinguished Russian gentleman of liberal convictions, who came to live in Geneva for a time.

He was a quite different sort of celebrity from Peter Ivanovitch—a dark-haired man with kind eyes, high-shouldered, courteous, and with something hushed and circumspect in his manner. He approached me, choosing the moment when there was no one near, followed by a grey-haired, alert lady in a crimson blouse.

"Our Sophia Antonovna wishes to be made known to you," he addressed me in his prudent voice. "And so I leave you two to have a talk together."

"I would never have intruded myself upon your notice," the grey-haired lady began at once, "if I had not been charged with a message for you."

It was a message of a few friendly words from Natalia Haldin. Sophia Antonovna had just returned from a secret excursion into Russia and had seen Miss Haldin. She lived in a town "in the centre" sharing her

compassionate labours between the horrors of overcrowded jails, and the heartrending misery of bereaved homes. She did not spare herself in good service, Sophia Antonovna assured me.

"She has a faithful soul, an undaunted spirit and an indefatigable body," the woman revolutionist summed it all up with a touch of enthusiasm.

A conversation thus engaged was not likely to drop from want of interest on my part. We went to sit apart in a corner where no one interrupted us. In the course of our talk about Miss Haldin, Sophia Antonovna remarked suddenly:

"I suppose you remember seeing me before? That evening when Natalia came to ask Peter Ivanovitch for the address of a certain Razumov, that young man who . . ."

"I remember perfectly," I said. And when Sophia Antonovna learned that I had in my possession that young man's journal given me by Miss Haldin, she became intensely interested. She did not conceal her curiosity to see the document.

I offered to show it to her, and she at once volunteered to call on me next day for that purpose.

She turned over the pages avidly for an hour or more, and then returned me the book with a faint sigh. While moving about Russia, she had seen Razumov too. He lived, not "in the centre," but "in the south." She described to me a little two-roomed house, in the suburb of some very small town, hiding within the high plank fence of a yard overgrown with nettles. He was crippled, ill, getting weaker every day, and Tekla the Samaritan, tended him unweariedly, with all the joy of natural devotion. There was nothing in that task to become disillusioned about.

I did not hide from Sophia Antonovna my surprise that she should have visited Mr. Razumov. I did not even understand the motive. But she informed me that she was not the only one.

"Some of *us* always go to see him when passing through. He is intelligent. He has ideas . . . He talks well, too."

Presently I heard for the first time of Razumov's public confession in Laspara's house. Sophia Antonovna gave me a detailed relation of what had occurred there. Razumov himself had told her all about it, most minutely.

Then looking hard at me with her brilliant black eyes:

"There are moments of evil in every life. A false suggestion enters one's brain, and then fear is born—fear of oneself, fear for oneself. Or else a false courage—who knows? Well, call it what you like; but tell me, how many of us would deliver themselves up deliberately to perdition (as he himself says in that book) rather than go on living, secretly debased in their own eyes? How many? . . . And please mark this—he was safe when he did it. It was just when he believed himself safe and more—infinitely more—when the possibility of being loved by that admirable girl first dawned upon him, that he discovered that his

bitterest railings, the worst wickedness, the devil work of his hate and pride, could never cover up the ignominy of the existence before him. There's character in such a discovery."

I accepted her conclusion in silence. Who would care to question the grounds of forgiveness or compassion? However, it appeared later on, that there was some compunction, too, in the charity extended by the revolutionary world to Razumov, the betrayer. Sophia Antonovna continued uneasily:

"And then, you know, he was the victim of an outrage. It was not authorised. Nothing was decided as to what was to be done with him. He had confessed voluntarily. And that Nikita who burst the drums of his ears purposely, out on the landing, you know, as if carried away by indignation—well, he has turned out to be a scoundrel of the worst kind—a traitor himself, a betrayer—a spy! Razumov told me he had charged him with it by a sort of inspiration . . ."

"I had a glimpse of that brute," I said. "How any of you could have been deceived for half a day passes my comprehension!"

She interrupted me.

"There! There! Don't talk of it. The first time I saw him, I, too, was appalled. They cried me down. We were always telling each other, 'Oh! you mustn't mind his appearance.' And then he was always ready to kill. There was no doubt of it. He killed—yes! in both camps. The fiend. . . ."

And Sophia Antonovna, after mastering the angry trembling of her lips, told me a very queer tale. It went that Councillor Mikulin, travelling in Germany (shortly after Razumov's disappearance from Geneva) happened to meet Peter Ivanovitch in a railway carriage. Being alone in the compartment, these two talked together half the night, and it was then that Mikulin, the Police Chief, gave a hint to the Arch-Revolutionist as to the true character of the Arch-slayer of gendarmes. It looks as though Mikulin had wanted to get rid of that particular agent of his own! He might have grown tired of him, or frightened of him. It must also be said that Mikulin had inherited the sinister Nikita from his predecessor in office.

And this story, too, I received without comment in my character of a mute witness of things Russian, unrolling their eastern logic before my western eyes. But I permitted myself a question:

"Tell me, please, Sophia Antonovna, did Mme. de S—— leave all her fortune to Peter Ivanovitch?"

"Not a bit of it." The woman Revolutionist shrugged her shoulders in disgust. "She died without making a will. A lot of nephews and nieces came down from Petersburg, like a flock of vultures, and fought for her money amongst themselves. All beastly Kammerherrs and Maids of Honour—abominable court flunkeys. Pfui."

"One does not hear much of Peter Ivanovitch now," I remarked, after a pause.

"Peter Ivanovitch," said Sophia Antonovna gravely, "has united himself to a peasant girl."

I was truly astonished.

"What! On the Riviera?"

"What nonsense! Of course not."

Sophia Antonovna's tone was slightly tart.

"Is he, then, living actually in Russia? It's a tremendous risk—isn't it?" I cried. "And all for the sake of a peasant girl. Don't you think it's very wrong of him?"

Sophia Antonovna preserved a mysterious silence for a while, then made a statement.

"He just simply adores her."

"Does he? Well, then I hope that she won't hesitate to beat him."

Sophia Antonovna got up and wished me good-bye, as though she had not heard a word of my impious hope; but, in the very doorway, where I attended her, she turned round for an instant, and declared in a firm voice:

"Peter Ivanovitch is an inspired man!"

THE END

The Return of the Englishman

He leant against the rail of the German liner, *Preussen alle Wege*, rapidly making Southampton Harbour. It was nineteen years since he had seen his native land: now he was returning —an exile, a stranger to his own people, almost as a visitant from the dead. Yet among all those hundreds straining from the ship there was no more happy a man. No friends or relations awaited him on the quay now assuming line and proportion. He was alone, and this was the supreme moment in his life.

To the cackling crowd about him the arrival there presently meant little more than a landing, a novelty, the end of a more or less monotonous voyage; but to the exile it was the fulfilment of a life's desire. Every hour of the long passage homewards he had nursed that moment in his thoughts, as were it some strange secret: lived with and loved it always. Every morning he had risen early and looked out upon the waves and laughed to them, that they brought him nearer to those which lapped the coasts of England; and each night he had fallen asleep, thinking of the old country, what it had been to him every day in all those long years of absence, what he would feel at the first glimpse of the island. Now the voyage was drawing to an end. He was in English waters—home at last, in England; and there she lay, as he remembered her as a lad, buoyant in the grey-blue light of early autumn morning with the chevying clouds and wind-hardiness about her.

England, his island home—the love of a lifetime leapt tumultuously within him as he beheld the green of his mother-land again, the white cliffs and downs rolling beyond, and the smoke and traffic on her dancing waters. How young, how joyous she looked, cased in her "sou-wester" cloak with that land prettiness and quiet, and that meaning, as of power and

battle, in the steel-grey restlessness of wind and wave! A sense of judgment seemed to lie in the drab monochrome that shrouded her. He was accustomed to the East, to the pageantry of the Oriental day. In the atmosphere of gales, that hung upon the island, with its lack of colour, of glow, of distance, he felt chilled, personally rebuked: it looked so small, so dainty, yet so defiant.

He turned to the sea. Yes, it was those brackish waters that had bred the sailors of England, and made them throughout the world supreme. He glanced up at the sky. Through the grey cap of ravening clouds the sun shone fitfully, and the little island seemed to nod to him with trim serenity. To be sure, this was the England of his boyhood, as he recalled her when he had watched her receding outline from the taffrail nineteen years ago. Time closed up. Continuity resumed its natural place. He felt suddenly as if he was returning after a prolonged holiday. The tang of the sea came to him—the wind of England and her dominion. He saw the "Jack" fluttering on the quay, the line of sward and drowsy down, and it was sweeter than a caress. A yearning, a joy so poignant that he almost flung out his arms and cried aloud his gratitude, possessed and choked him. Tears, the first that he had shed since boyhood, dimmed his eyes.

From the first moment of breaking land he had taken post on the vessel's bow. Each wave seemed to him an English wave. The first sight of England, caught through his glass through the morning haze, filled him with a beautiful and incommunicable rapture. When, shortly after, he could discern the land with his naked eye, he stood up and greeted it with bared head. But being an Englishman he could not speak. He could not throw out his arms to that shore as impulse prompted him, or wave his cap, or answer it as he felt it there speaking to him; so he stood up very straight and gazed with his life's soul flowing towards it. There was a little lump in his throat, he knew. Dear land, dear home, dear England! The sight of her was reward sufficient for all those years of exile. The old waves swept and leapt against her, and the old clouds hung upon her greenness, and he was returning, approaching

now rapidly minute by minute; yet he could not speak, he could not even wave his hand, his heart was too full with reverence.

As the ship drew nearer in, and the coast-line opened up in the rising light, he had broken out in loud laughter. He had not the slightest notion why he laughed. It just came to him naturally, and seemed to relieve him. And so he had stood, glancing at the gulls flying before the prow, laughing aloud at the very things he had so often and so passionately longed all those past years to see again, which, now that he saw them, regained instantaneously and with unbroken sequence their old-time aspect and meaning, yet somehow meant what he had never known them signify before. A yawl had passed earlier in the morning, and as the men stood up in their oils and greeted the liner, some with a wave of their clay pipes, some with a gesture of the hand, others with a mere passing look, they seemed to him the epitome of the Island's history. Every cloud seemed pregnant with the nation's destiny, hurrying, driving on, like the conquering spirit of England. The gulls were fatter than in other parts. He was glad at the tossing of the little craft, he would have been disappointed otherwise. Only so were real sailors made. Only so had Englishmen caught heart to sally forth, discover and dominate the world. Only so could little England be, and continue to be, what she was to mankind, to all realms and peoples, and to all who sailed the seas.

It was the sea which had given Englishmen their soul and independence, and their great fearlessness. Was not the sea, the command of the sea, Nelson's holograph, as it were, to the nation? In all history there was no trust more rightly won or more sacred to its guardians. Assuredly, on the ocean the future of England and Empire depended; those gales were the melody of the national expression, and boats were her sovereign guardians.

Let the ships that defended the Island interests cease to be, as they must always be, the most numerous, the most efficient, the best manned, let the blight of ease once sap the heart of

Englishmen, and England, her Empire and all the humanity that she has won to in the world would be blasted in the waters for ever. With boats England rose and ruled, with boats she must live or die. They were the toll of the nation's continuity, the stay of all her affairs, the tithes that she paid for the living and for all Englishmen hereafter. In the wind and the sea and her battle keels the greatness of England was inscribed, and upon them hung the destiny of the morrow.

A little further down, about a mile or so outside Southampton Harbour, he saw the masts of a sunken collier protruding above the waters. At other times the sight of this wreck washed by the seas, with the trucks of her stricken masts pointing to the sky, would have provoked a feeling of pity ; but to the returning Englishman the very sorrow of her was fraught with inspiration. This was the tale of England, of her power and endeavour. To the exile the wreck seemed natural on an English shore, beautiful and symbolic. He looked at her spars with love. No welcome that his country could have extended to him pleased him as much as this. Here was the truth, the ideal he had always cherished in his heart. It was well. He had returned to the land of ships and sailors. It gave him, what he had waited for, the national atmospheric expression.

As he mused, a thought of doubt and dread oppressed him. Had he read its meaning rightly ? Was that first impression of the dauntlessness of the old country a wreck too, like the sunken and deserted hulk ? Was it an omen, not of life, as he had taken it to be, but of disaster and decay ? Was England vital, leading, progressive ? Was it that those masts pointed to him there in mockery ? It occurred to him that he was returning on a German ship. Nineteen years ago when he had set out into the world that, most certainly, could not have been. Yet, what of that ? Nations grew. England had her Navy. Never, no, never would she lag behind in the needful building of ships, in the maintenance of the standard of fighting sea-power indispensable to her existence. Not an Englishman would have questioned such a truism a decade or so ago. It could not be. Englishmen would never countenance a national crime such as that ; they would never tolerate any weakness

in their first and only line of armament and defence. The idea was monstrous, absurd. No matter what sea-power grew around them, they would never stint themselves of their plain duty. They would be ready always to meet any challenge successfully. There must be no doubt as to the issue. He smiled as he chased the thought away. No Empire had ever yet endured in history. Could any Empire hope to endure? England held the heritage of centuries of faith. No, no, she had the men, she would have the ships and the money. The sunken masts were out of sight now, he turned towards the land.

Now he was back again. No schoolboy returning for his first holidays ever felt so riotously irresponsible. He watched the English pilot climb up on deck and take over command of the vessel, and the little act was a thing of wonder to him. Slowly the great ship hauled up and lay against the crowded quay. He was in no hurry; he wanted to take it all in, to step ashore alone, flushed with pride and love. He watched the rush of people from the ship, the greetings, and bustle of return. At that moment his heart was too big for thought. He only felt it all, conscious of an ineffaceable impression. When all the passengers had gone ashore he gathered up his things and stepped down the high ladder.

As he stood on his native shore once more, a feeling of intense gratitude overcame him. England had not given him much perhaps. His parents were dead, he had not heard from relation or friend for over ten years. He was alone, derelict, an anachronism. Only memory, dim vistas of childhood and of youth, sentiment united him with the country of his birth. He had no home, or ties or associations. What did that matter? He was an Englishman. He had come back. He felt like a conqueror returning from the wars. He felt, curiously enough it appeared to him, very much as he had when he quitted England, setting out with a few hundred pounds in his pocket to make his fortune, very strong, very happy, very proud. Long ago when the cliffs of England melted into the haze, a great calm had come upon him and he had remembered it as one of the possessions of his life. He was so calm now, absolutely and ludicrously happy.

"Bill," he overheard a loafer remark, "rum cove that, ain't he?"

"Bill!" He had not heard the word for nearly twenty years.

In an instant a thousand and one impressions of his youth rose up before him. Like the sunken collier outside the harbour, the word came to him as the truest English thing that he knew, the call which sanctioned his return. It was an acclaim such as he had longed for, his welcome home, more real, dearer to him than any love embrace: it was as if a long-forgotten friend clasped him by the hand. "Nothing, nothing whatever," he replied to the usual interrogatory at the Custom-house. "I've come back home," and instinctively the man seemed to understand. He gave the porter who carried his bag a sovereign, and he, too, seemed to understand. He bought all the newspapers he could see and left them in the waiting-room. He laughed at everything he saw. All the way up to London he sat staring out of the window, unable to read or think; even smoking bored him. He simply hung upon the fleeting fields and hedges, the trees and villages, like a man entranced. The animals were as no animals in any country in the world, so big and calm and strong. Everything seemed pretty, sensible, and lazy. It was all exactly as he remembered it. He leant back in his corner dreaming of the world of happiness he was entering into. What he would do, where he would go, what did he care? He would tell the cabman to drive him to a hotel. He was sitting in an English train speeding on his way to London.

He sought to analyse his sensations, to grasp the meaning of his happiness, for in the whole British Isles there was neither man nor woman who knew him by name or sight or reputation. In America a patriot was made in twenty-four hours. Why should he feel such unbounded rapture—a forlorn and desolate exile? Why had he returned? He could not fathom it. This love of country—it seemed perfectly natural, irresistible. It was no vulgar spirit with him, he knew that. This meeting with England roused no blatant cry. Reduced to bare truth it was the consciousness of nationality, the sense that, outcast or

forgotten, he was yet an Englishman, thought like an Englishman, acted like an Englishman, and would, whatever his luck or fate in whatever part of the globe, so feel and die.

Instead of lonely, he felt, for the first time, as if he were going to work, to take his place, in the national scheme to which he belonged ; to put on the harness of his country. Out there all these years he had toiled for himself, for existence. Now that he had a sufficiency he was coming back naturally, like a bee that had strayed from the hive. Everything, every creature in the world, had its place, its law, in the morphology of life—the sepals, stamen, and carpels of a flower, the tiniest cilia of the tiniest cell organisms. Possibly, it was so with men and nations and communities. The very sea-weed clinging to the shore had its uses, helping to lessen the inroad of the waves. The soft moss on the moors acted as sponges in days of drought. It was the action of microscopic atomies which formed coral. Even the stinging hydroid illumined the sea. No man, therefore, was useless in the scheme of cosmic evolution. He belonged to his country exactly and as fittingly as any finial in a great spire. He seemed to see quite clearly his part and place in the whole to which he was returning. There were things he could do, things he should do. He was proud of it. The illusions of his youth had long since gone. It appeared odd to him that his pleasure should be so unselfish. He was thinking all the time not of himself but of his country, of the fate which awaited England.

Mingled with his gladness this thought troubled him. Fate overtook all life—mote of the sea, kings, dynasties, empires, the very laws of attraction and rotation. What would be England's ? Endeavour had been her watchword. For some reason inherent to the insular character Englishmen had contrived more than other peoples, individually and collectively. They had the vanity of achievement. They had kindled a great light in the world. They would have to uphold it. Rough-hewn across the world this work of England had been carried. He had seen it on many occasions, in many places : on the whole it had been a humanising achievement. Conquerors—that was what Englishmen had been, but now there was less to conquer.

That was the danger. In the restless battle of life only the untiring won. Those who paused or let go went down inevitably. The world had changed enormously since he had left his country. Mighty empires had arisen, steeled with mighty ambitions, fighters for England's supremacy. Never before was the spirit of nationality so strong, so universal. It had taken the place of the flag and of fealty to kings, and its bond of sentiment was language. Always, splendidly, that had been England's strength. A little island comprised of four more or less racial antipathies, yet one, how proudly, gloriously one! An Empire vast beyond the dreams of Cæsar, yet one with England and Shakespeare. No, it was no mean thing to be a good patriot. He was proud because he was proud of his country, of his countrymen. In London no one would know him, yet he would be at home—that was his right; he would jostle with the crowds in the streets and have no loneliness in his heart. After nineteen years of solitude abroad he could never be alone in England.

The outskirts of the endless city, and momentarily the arrival in the gloom of the terminus, caused him a poignant feeling of depression, but the instant he stood on the platform his joy returned to him. "No," he said to the porter, "I left England nineteen years ago in a 'growler.' I'm coming back in one." The straw in the cab delighted him. He called to the cabman to drive him where he pleased; then, as the cab rumbled slowly out of the station, he leant back and shouted like one demented: "England, England. I've come back."

The Railway Ferment

By Rowland Kenney
(Ex-Railwayman)

THE prevalent idea that the railway strike of a few weeks ago was a spontaneous outburst due to the wild words of agitators, the success of the transport workers, and the heat, is an erroneous one, for serious trouble has been brewing for years and the signs of an outbreak have been plain for some time past, though no doubt the factors mentioned above precipitated it. In many ways it was a pity that circumstances led the men to act when they did; it would have been wiser to have delayed the strike until they made out a clearer case, not merely for recognition, but for larger and more definite demands. The really remarkable feature of the whole affair has been the enthusiasm and the sense of unity displayed by the men.

Ten years ago, when I was a goods porter, a general strike would have been utterly impossible in our district, for the idea that a man in a high grade was socially superior to a lower grade man—what we called the "grade notion"—that fine flower of working-class snobbery, was in full bloom, and concerted action was unthinkable. The goods porter was regarded as an inferior animal by the shunter; the shunter was tolerated as a necessary evil by the goods guard, who had wild hopes that some time he would be able to look the passenger guard squarely in the eyes as a brother and a man of equal rank; and so on. The "nippers," being wiser than we and too young to be snobs, gave us all an equal amount of "cheek" or treated us with profane contempt.

Then came a glimmer of reason, and the All Grades Movement of 1906 was born. The continual failures of the sectional strikes had disheartened thousands of trade unionists, and caused them to turn with longing eyes to the Labour Party, trusting that the wonderful promises of the political section of the trade union movement would bear fruit. But, fortunately, the political movement had not killed the idea of direct action in the railwaymen's unions, and they pressed forward on the

old lines of the industrial campaign—our demands to be met, or industrial war.

The programme of the national movement of four years ago was a formidable document, too long to be quoted in full, and remarkable for the large demands it made. It was divided into three sections: England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. The principal items in the England and Wales section were :—

An eight-hour day for the men concerned in the movement of vehicles in traffic.

That ten hours be the maximum working day for all other classes of railwaymen.

That a minimum of rate and a quarter be paid for all time worked over the standard rate of hours, and rate and a half for all Sunday work.

An immediate advance of 2s. per week for all grades, except those included in the application for an eight-hour day.

That the demands for better pay were not excessive is proved by the figures issued in 1907 by Mr. Richard Bell, then general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, who gave the following table of members employed, grouped according to wages, and covering over thirty grades:—

Wage Groups.	England & Wales.	Scotland.	Ireland.	Total.
Under 12s. per week	6,460	360	390	7,210
12s. to 15s.	11,560	1,270	3,380	16,210
16s. „ 18s.	33,390	4,490	2,220	40,100
19s. and 20s.	29,920	6,840	650	37,410
21s. „ 22s.	32,820	4,670	610	38,100
23s. to 25s.	44,320	4,920	570	49,810
26s. „ 30s.	36,610	3,820	470	40,900
31s. „ 33s.	8,400	740	120	9,260
34s. „ 40s.	6,630	1,230	210	8,070
Over 40s.	11,580	350	280	12,210
	221,690	28,690	8,900	259,280

From this table we get one hundred thousand railwaymen employed in 1907 at £1 per week or less, and as this figure holds good to-day I will illustrate it a little, for it is very difficult for that section of the public which has never lived on a pound a week to realise what the figures mean.

In August of this year the Railway Clerks' Association issued some valuable statistics compiled from weekly budgets of household expenses drawn up by a number of their members.

From the summary of an analysis of the weekly household budgets of thirty-three average senior station clerks on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway in seventeen principal towns in 1910, we get :—

Average number in family	4.24
Average salary per family, per week	£1 9 6½
Average expenditure per family, per week	1 10 10¾

An average weekly shortage of 1s. 4¼d. per family.

In fifteen cases the income exactly meets the expenditure; in six cases there are small balances to the good, the average being 1s. 0½d. per family, though 3s. 3½d. of this is in a budget which allows nothing for fresh meat; and in the remaining twelve cases there are shortages amounting to 51s. 2d., an average of 4s. 3¼d. per family, which is met by earnings from other sources, including those of wives and children.

To complete their evidence for an increase of wages, the Clerks' Association also went into the question of the higher cost of living. Among the evidence submitted by the Association to the Midland General Manager and Directors when they approached the Company for higher salaries last year was a household budget of one of the clerks, which shows that, for the same house and for the same quantities of fuel and foodstuffs, he paid in 1910 no less than 3s. 8¾d. a week more than in 1904. The various increases were :—

	s.	d.
Rent	0	3
Coal	0	8
Meat	1	0
Bread	0	7½
Butter	0	2¼
Sugar	0	1½
Cheese	0	1
Bacon	0	8
Carried Forward ..	3	7¼

			s.	d.
Brought Forward ..			3	7¼
Flour			0	0½
Lard			0	1½
Rice			0	1
			3	10¼
Less Tea ..	0	1		
„ Cocoa ..	0	½		
			0	1½
Total			3	8¾

This budget was one of thirty compiled by married clerks employed by the Midland Company in various towns. Half of them were of clerks receiving £80 per annum. All the others, except two who received less than £80, were receiving from £85 to £105 per annum. Now note the comments of the Clerks' Association—and just comments they are as the records show :—"The outstanding feature of these budgets was that the compilers of them were living on the bare subsistence level, and must have had considerable trouble and worry in making ends meet; their salaries in every instance were utterly inadequate to supply the normal needs of themselves, and their wives and children." To the evidence of the railway clerks on this subject I will add that of the Co-operative Wholesale Society.

According to calculations based on wholesale prices, or prices charged at the port, in 1898, a sovereign would buy 80.81 pounds of groceries, and only 71.29 in 1910. The price

of average house coal at the pit mouth in 1898 was 9s. 11½d., in 1910 it had risen to 13s. 3d.

The clerks have proved their claim that, on a salary of thirty shillings per week, they are on the bare subsistence level, so, obviously, we must put the hundred thousand men whose weekly wages are £1 per week or less on the level of semi-starvation. One of the latter, a friend of mine employed in a works department in East London, has a family of seven children. His wage is 18s. 2d. per week, and he pays 7s. 6d. per week rent, leaving his wife 10s. 8d. to feed and clothe nine persons. Incidentally 75 per cent. of the men in his gang are married. Perhaps the union to which they belong will arrange to get household budgets from them. They will be interesting documents.

Before leaving this phase of the subject I will deal with a point which is always raised when one compares working-men's wages with the salaries of clerks or other suburbanites. That is the question of the necessity of clerks "keeping up appearances."

If we had one atom of respect for the men who perform manual labour, the phrase "keeping up appearances" would never again be used. It is based on the old idea of the social superiority of those who get a living without soiling their hands. The public is so accustomed to treating the artisan with contumely that it considers any kind of shoddy is good enough for him, and the pity of it is that the working-classes acquiesce in this general view of the matter. As a matter of fact, good serviceable clothes are as necessary, or more necessary, to the goods porter or platelayer, who has to face all weathers and submit them to rough usage, than to the man who sits at a desk all day. When the worker is fortunate enough to get a sufficient quantity of good clothes they cost quite as much as the clerk's, as anyone knows who has worn both.

When the Conciliation Boards were set up as a result of the threatened general railway strike in 1907, the railway workers hoped that at length their claim for higher wages and, what they considered of equal importance, more reasonable treatment by the companies, was to be met; instead of which their position has steadily grown worse.

Years ago, if anyone had asked in our yard, "What do you object to most?" I think the question of wages would have been waved aside, and we should have replied: "The pin-pricks and senseless tyranny of our superiors."

We were harassed and worried in a hundred ways; kept working outside when a rain or snow storm came on, and not allowed to go and get adequate covering; our clothes spoiled by handling evil-smelling goods (the company would not provide us with overalls, and out of our 17s. or 18s. per week we could not afford to buy them); being asked to oblige an inspector by working a man short in a gang which had to move and lift heavy weights, and then discovering that for obliging him the gang was permanently one man less.

But bad as it was then, the policy of badgering men has been developed to a much greater extent since the commencement of the agitation of 1906.

Hosts of petty officials have been engaged to watch and report men for slight and often unavoidable offences.

In the case of signalmen, many important boxes are understaffed. The official watchdog, nicknamed "time snatcher" or "speediator," will hover about a box for hours. The signalman, owing to a rush of work, may be a few seconds late in lowering a signal; he is reported and reprimanded—or worse. And there is no appeal; in every case the official is believed and no excuse is allowed. In the Locomotive Department the same evil exists. Responsible drivers are harassed until they almost break down under the nervous strain.

In short, the companies, in their efforts to crush out the spirit of revolt, have descended to a species of repression little short of physical torture. The tyranny of minor officials did more to rouse the men than any amount of agitation or revolutionary propaganda could have done.

To give the reverse side of the picture. One of the railways in the South of England was scarcely affected by the strike. This was due to the fact that the General Manager of this company made it a point, wherever possible, of personally investigating all complaints or suggestions sent in by the staff. He visited districts affected and acquired information direct from the men instead of merely relying on reports from interested officials, and, in consequence, he was respected and backed by the staff when trouble arose.

But to the active tyranny of their officials must be added the unsavoury conduct of most of the companies with reference to the Conciliation Boards.

In his evidence before the Royal Commission of Enquiry into the working of the Railway Conciliation Scheme, on

Monday, August 28th, Mr. J. E. Williams, general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, pointed out that the terms of settlement setting up the (Conciliation Board) machinery were arrived at on November 6th, 1907, and the two earliest boards to be formed were the Great Eastern and the Midland, on March 1st and April 2nd, 1908, respectively. The latest were the Caledonian and the Midland and Great Western of Ireland, which were not formed until December 3rd, 1908, and March 1st, 1909, respectively. The average was about June, 1908, or about seven months after the settlement was arrived at. Consequently a good deal of aggravation was caused among the men by the delay, as there had been no departure from their original claims made on January 18th, 1907.

With regard to getting the awards of the Boards interpreted, the mens' position was that the awards were the joint product of the two sides of the Central Board, but when they came to deal with questions of the interpretation of the awards, practically the whole of the railway companies said: "The award is our instrument. You have nothing whatever to do with its interpretation."

Mr. Albert Fox, general secretary of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, stated in his evidence that men were suspended, fined, and reduced in wages as much as a shilling and one and threepence per day, for being five minutes late with an express train, and all opportunity of proving that they were not to blame was denied them. They were told, when they complained, that if they did not like it they could leave the service. The companies contended that these were matters of discipline. They did not come under the heading of wages and could not be dealt with by the Boards.

One of the reasons why the men desire recognition is that the union officials can bring before the directors these cases of unjust punishment, which are as vital to them and need as prompt consideration as questions affecting hours and wages. In fact the men on some of the systems are so heartily sick of the 1907 Scheme that they absolutely refuse to take any part whatever in electing representatives to the Boards, or to allow any questions to be laid before those Boards when they are elected.

Mr. A. Bellamy, president of the A.S.R.S., in his evidence on the Sir Edward Fry award, which gave substantial concessions to the men on the London and North Western Railway, pointed

out that it took twelve months from the completion of the arbitration proceedings to get an interpretation of the award, and then the company was the interpreter, and by a system of regrading, they evaded the extra payment due to many of the men according to the award.

Mr. Bellamy also instanced the fact that :—" In the year prior to the award, for the Locomotive men £815,000 odd was paid in wages, and last year, after a full year of the working of the award, when there was a considerably larger number of passengers, and something like 2,000,000 tons more of goods carried, the company paid £771,910 only in wages for the working of locomotives. Therefore the companies had recouped themselves, and the men were not reaping any advantage."

To anyone who has followed the progress of the agitation and read the mens' evidence before the Royal Commission, the idea must present itself that, under present circumstances, all conciliation schemes and arbitration boards are bound to fail.

The men are determined to get more pay for less work ; the companies are equally determined that profits shall not suffer, so that whilst ostensibly granting more pay to some men, they are manipulating the arrangements and classing of the work in such a way that the men generally are in the same or a worse position than before the agitation commenced. We must therefore come to the conclusion that, so long as the present system lasts, there will be continuous war, with the public battered about between the contending parties.

When the men struck work they were told that a settlement must be arrived at so as to ensure the safety, the comfort, and the convenience of the public. But the men would have been quite justified in turning round and informing the public that it was a piece of impertinence to suggest such a thing. For years the railwaymen have been exposing the intolerable conditions under which they are forced to labour, but the public has never turned on the companies and insisted that a living wage should be paid to railway servants. If the public will ignore the men until they show fight then the only decent thing the public can do is to give a fair field and no favour and put up with the resultant inconvenience.

But, it is argued, it is so vital to the well-being and general prosperity of the nation that the railways should run smoothly,

that any great dispute endangering the national service immediately becomes a public question and should not be left to an appeal to force.

If it be a public duty to keep the railways working, then it should surely be the duty of the public to see that the men who work the railways should be paid a living wage.

That responsible government officials take this view is proved by the publication of the report of the Departmental Committee set up by Mr. Winston Churchill, then President of the Board of Trade, in 1909. The Committee, which was formed to deal with the large number of issues raised by the introduction of the Great Northern, Great Central, and Great Eastern Companies Joint Bill, seeking powers to amalgamate those lines into one concern, found that the employees ought to share in any economic advantages which may accrue to the railway industry as the result of abandoning the old system of competition.

In the Debate on the Railway Fusions Bill in March, 1909, Mr. Churchill himself said that " Parliament had to make sure that the interests of the general public were properly safeguarded ; the public and the railway servants should be assured of their share of the enhanced profits."

Further, the Departmental Committee report that, in regulating the relations between railway companies and the public, Parliament finds itself more and more under the necessity of regulating the internal relations of the companies and their servants, and they advise full recognition of the fact that the natural lines of the development of an improved and more economical railway system lie in the direction of more perfect co-operation between the various railway companies.

The railway system, in the nature of things, should be a monopoly. The present system, where we have over 250 different companies with their various boards of directors, diversity of management, overlapping and duplication of routes and staffs will have to be superseded by agreements, combinations, and arrangements, until we have in practice, if not in theory, a Railway Trust.

As a consequence of the unification, there will be an enormous saving in expenditure and a tremendous growth of profits. Parliament, as stated in the extracts quoted above, is of the opinion that the employees should share in the increasing prosperity, but it is demonstrable that, in places where there have

been agreements arranged, the men have lost by the company's gain, or, where the companies have nominally given better conditions, they have in practice taken care that the men actually gained nothing.

The function of the railways is, primarily, a social one, but this social function will never be performed so long as Parliament is content merely to pass permissory Bills regulating the affairs of the companies. In the interests, not merely of the employees, but of the whole nation, the Government should obtain absolute control, and it can never do this until we have railway monopoly owned by the State.

Thoroughness in the Theatre

The only way to get it

By Gordon Craig

A Chorus of Voices: Welcome back to England! We *are* so pleased to see you!

1st Voice: Now I will tell you what you ought to do.

2nd Voice: Now I will tell you what *I* think you ought to do.

3rd Voice: I am sure you ought to . . .

4th Voice: Now I will tell you what we will arrange . . .

Myself: Gentlemen, may I submit to you *my* plan?

In 1900 I had gathered together a certain number of ideas which I wished to test in the English theatre. I managed to test some of these ideas in the one or two operas and plays that I produced from 1900 to 1903, but I found at the end of that time that a public theatre, with an audience paying for their seats, is not the right place in which to test ideas, even although the bad habit is popular with some managers. I then had thoughts of establishing what I called a "School of Theatrical Art." I spoke about this to a few people, but at that time they did not seem to think I had sufficiently proved my right to possess ideas nor to spread them. So I went away to Germany and travelled on to Italy and Russia, and the Germans and the Russians made use of my ideas, testing them, alas, as I had done, hastily, in a public theatre and before crowded audiences. I am told they have even brought the results of some of these experiments to England. And I am told that the English public is raving about them. I am very pleased to hear it.

May I now be permitted to suggest something to my English friends that is a little more practical than this hasty way of experimenting before the public? And may I hope that the English public will bear with me in my endeavour to bring into actuality this more practical idea?

I intend to suggest nothing complicated. My proposal is this: That there shall be a place in which to experiment and test my ideas (not necessarily those ideas which I took to Germany and to Russia, but ideas which I have been extremely careful to protect till I should return some day to England); and, with the place, the men who shall carry out the experiments; and, with the men, the one or two machines and instruments necessary to their work. My proposal is made not only on behalf of the theatre as an ideal, but also for the sake of the modern theatre, which is, unfortunately, very far from the ideal. I am in love with the former; I should dearly and sincerely like to be on none but the best of terms with the latter.

I have written blaming the modern theatre so much that the modern theatre is perfectly justified in being very angry with me. But then I am perfectly justified in saying what I have said, because I hold a peculiar position in the theatre. I have the honour to belong to one of the oldest stage families; I have been nursed by one who created beauty in the theatre, and who has never ceased to regret the appearance of vulgarity and ugliness and pretentiousness in the theatre, and therefore, if I criticise, I am but criticising the way my own home is being conducted. This is held by some people to be an offence against all things sacred to the theatre. I claim that it is those sacred things which have already been offended against.

But I am quite prepared to stop all argument about this matter, when I am in a position to prove, by the tests that I speak of above, that the hundred and one ways of improving the theatre are possible, instead of impossible.

I wish for a school, or let us call it a theatre, of experiment. I wish for twenty men to carry out with me the experiments, and I wish the results of the tests to be offered immediately to any modern European or American theatre that wishes to make use of them. (It is understood, of course, that our experiments would be made in private.)

Let us inquire into how and why my experimental theatre might be of immediate use to the modern stage.

It might be that a manager intends to produce a play by Shakespeare. He has his own ideas about the production, and his ideas are very often beyond the understanding of even his own staff. It is really often very difficult for a manager of imagination (let us say like Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree) to convey to his staff the exact meaning of what is in his head.

He may think he has suggested something to them that is quite clear, and it may appear quite vague to them. For instance, supposing he were to say "Oh, I wish for a scene that is like this"; and he moves his right hand; or "I want a scene like that," and he moves his left hand; it is reasonable to suppose that the ordinary staff of a theatre would find it very difficult to follow his meaning, although to him it seems quite clear. Such a manager can hardly read to his staff the lines of the play, and then explain to them all that those lines suggest to him, because were he to do so they would be even more in the dark. The staff of a theatre seldom have the opportunity of exercising their understanding of poetry.

How then can they carry out the subtle desires of such a manager? In despair, he is forced to turn to one of his many scrap books and, taking from it some newspaper illustration, is obliged to ask his staff to do "something like that."

To save this trouble and to put an end to this confusion, such an experimental school as I suggest would exist. The manager would say to the school committee, "I intend to produce *Hamlet*. Will you please submit to me original and beautiful scenes for the play, made to scale, showing me the colours of the costumes grouped in the different scenes, lighted in some beautiful and not entirely old-fashioned manner; and will you kindly show me how I can carry that out practically at a minimum cost. At the same time, please bear in mind that the appearance of the ghost of Hamlet's father has always been a trifle ridiculous. Can you suggest to me an original and yet practical plan for restoring his grandeur and mystery?"

And the necessary arrangements having been made, the school, at a fixed date, would submit the *mise-en-scene* of any production in all its details, and would demonstrate on its experimental stage all that needed proving.

This that I have said may apply, of course, to some moderately ordinary production, given by a conventional manager at some popular West End theatre.

Now let us take the case of a manager who adventures further than the one above, who wishes to attempt newer things. I can take a very good case in proof; that of Mr. Martin Harvey. Had such a school as I suggest been in existence when he wished to produce Sophocles' *Oedipus*, Mr. Harvey would not have been obliged to call in the assistance of the German director, Professor Max Reinhardt, but, after a few

conferences with our school committee, he would have found he could obtain from us all he wished for.

Mr. Harvey, I understand, is going to alter Covent Garden. He is going to remove all the stalls; he is going to turn it into a kind of Greek theatre; and the piece is going to be lighted in a way, if not familiar to all, quite familiar to me. It is going to be dressed differently from usual productions; the movements will be different from what we are used to; and all this is going to be done by Mr. Martin Harvey *because Professor Max Reinhardt has tested English ideas in Berlin a year or two ago.*

Is it unreasonable for me to ask that we in England should have the privilege of testing these ideas of ours *here*, and that we should not wait two or three years before they have been tested in Germany and then *brought* here by foreigners.

I want a school or theatre of experiment in which to make these tests.

But it is not solely for these two classes of production that I wish this school to be established. It is not wise merely to consider to-day: we must look a little ahead. To-morrow and the day after to-morrow, are really not bad points on which to keep our eyes.

I was told, on my return to England, that, by the patriotism and good offices of the Hon. Mrs. Lyttelton and Sir Carl and Lady Meyer, the National Theatre scheme was no longer a wild and harebrained idea, but had come nearer the point of practical politics. I was told that Sir Carl and Lady Meyer had given £70,000 to advance this scheme.

Now, what I should like to know is, whether any provision has been made for filling that theatre with good things after it has been erected. I do not speak of the actors and actresses, for there are many fine English actors and actresses. I am not speaking of the drama, because we have a great drama —the greatest in Europe. But I am thinking of the ideas which are to surround the drama and to be of service to the actors; and these ideas I do not see any signs of anywhere.

Ideas are vague, until they have been tested.

I ask once more for a place in which these ideas can be tested. So that, when the National Theatre comes into being in a few years' time, there will be a store of ideas, practically tested and found reliable, with which to embellish our national drama.

I have so far only spoken of three good reasons for establishing the proposed school of experiment. I have very many

more reasons which I will place before the committee, which I hope will be formed to consider my plan. But I have one more good reason to give to the public. It is that since last September "one London Theatre has lost £24,000, one syndicate trading over the same period lost £30,000, and a management . . . gave up after heavy losses—the expensive amusement of offering something the public did not want."*

Added to this, when we realise that since September last the fourteen following London productions had short runs,† and much money, energy and time must have been lost on each, we see that it is about time to do something practical to avoid a continual repetition of such economical blunders.

The plays were : —

Play.	Theatre.	Performances.
A Bolt from the Blue ..	Duke of York's ..	18
The Pigeon House	Court	16
Young Fernold	New	13
The Bishop's Son	Garrick	6
The Green Elephant ..	Comedy	7
The Witch	Court	7
Lysistrata	Little	27
Decorating Clementine..	Globe	24
One of the Dukes	Playhouse	15
Playing with Fire.....	Comedy	12
Half-a-Crown	Royalty	11
The Parisienne	Royalty	22
Above Suspicion	Haymarket.....	18
The Girl who couldn't lie	Criterion	22

II The School

In talking about a school of experiment for an art such as ours, it will be best to avoid technical details as much as possible. How little illuminating would be a long description of the means we shall employ in our experiments with light and the scene. How little it would say to you if I described what we shall practise with the voice! And how little you would be moved if I were to tell you how we are to study the movements of nature!

* From the annual report prepared each year by Mr. James Waters and printed in the *Daily Mail*.

† Mr. Waters reports sixteen failures.

All this would be more or less asking you to fix your attention upon something upon the table, some book or plan or chart. Instead of that, let us walk through the school. By seeing it you will understand far better.

And please not to raise even the edge of those curtains where you see the notice "Temporarily closed." For, with your permission, we must keep some secrets to ourselves.

We are standing in the central hall of the building; you look up, and seem surprised at the loftiness of the building, with light coming in from high windows. Already you do not feel as if you were at a school. You ask what use is made of this room, and I point to one end of it. There you see a large stage upon which my co-workers (for we are all pupils in this school) are trying experiments with a new apparatus which we made last week, for the purpose of casting a series of parallel shafts of light, each of which has parallel edges—a most difficult yet a most desirable thing to do, I assure you.

"Already a little too complicated for you, perhaps? Well, but the effect is beautiful, is it not? and simple. Very well, then, does it matter what complications we have had to go through to reach such simplicity?"

"But why are all those figures dressed in white, and why is the scene white?"

"Well, we are interested for the moment in seeing how much colour is to be found in the use of white light upon white objects."

"And do you find any?"

"Oh, yes, quite a little."

"I like a lot of colour. I saw such a blaze of colour at Covent Garden when the Russian Ballet came. Do not you like the Russian Ballet and their stage setting?"

"Yes, quite well. But to give you that we should need to make no experiments. We simply buy some pots of paint and then ask Mr. Rothenstein, Mr. John and Mr. Pryde, the painters, to give us a few months of their valuable time to do our work for us. That is not exactly what we purpose doing here. The whole reason of this school is that we may train the men of the theatre to be able to do their own work for themselves—and to do it thoroughly. It seems to me rather a reasonable proposition, and it seems to me utterly unreasonable for a serious institution like the theatre to have to call in outsiders, however talented they may be, in order to help us out of our difficulties.

What the stage has never yet learned to do, is to surmount its own difficulties.

"I want to see the theatre entirely self-dependent. As it is, when it wants colour, designs, costumes and lighting effect, it goes to artists who can know nothing about the theatre, having practised the art of painting, which is a totally different art.

"I do not believe that I am the only person in the English theatre who thinks like this. And, therefore, I believe that this school, when it begins to get a little better known, will be very often visited by our theatrical friends."

"Oh, I like *that*!"

This exclamation is caused by my visitor suddenly being carried away by something she sees upon the stage. She claps her hands, she says she "has never seen anything so lovely before."

"I am so pleased. That is the second reason why we made this school. It was to give you and everyone else all sorts of things that you had never seen before, and to give you pleasure through them."

"Yes, but it is wonderful! All that light pouring up like a torrent in great waves. How exciting!"

"Yes. That is the third reason; to excite you. Why the, school seems to be quite a success in the first five minutes!"

"Yes, but tell me what it is for."

"It is *for* nothing in particular. It is for the sake of the experiment—it is in order to find out. And we come across such things every day when making our experiments."

"Yes, but can't you put it to some use, so that every one can see it?"

"Do you think people would like to see it?"

"Why, there is nobody who would not be excited if they saw such a thing as that upon the stage."

"Well then, perhaps sooner or later we shall find some manager who will want such things—some manager who wants to excite his audience. After all, exciting impressions in a theatre are rare enough nowadays!"

"Now do tell me how you discover things like that!"

"The reason is that we have *time* in which to discover them. That is the first requisite. Then we have the place. That is the second. And we have the idea. That is the third. Then we merely work away until we find it out. If we had to try and

create any such impression in a theatre we should not be able to do so, because we have not the time to devote to such a search, because we have to produce plays by, let us say, March 1st, or July 5th, at a given hour, and we are under contract to do so."

"But are there not workshops all over London, where they have time and where their whole year's work consists in making experiments in their own branches? Are there not theatrical electricians, theatrical scene painters, theatrical costumiers, and do they do nothing?"

"Oh, certainly: they do wonders. These suppliers of 'effects' to the London theatres are possibly the most capable in Europe. The scene painters in London are undoubtedly most admirable scene painters; and what costumiers we have! And the electricians are first class.

"But what is the use of considering all these things *separately*, or of separate people supplying them to the theatre, when they have to be judged as a whole, when united? You may paint the most perfect scene in the world, and you may bring in the most perfect lighting apparatus in the theatre, *but, unless the two things, together with the actor and the actor's voice*, have been considered as a unit, the most dire results must always be produced.

"Now that is what always happens in a theatre to-day. In the old days there was a better chance of unity, even if scene painters and costumiers were less archaeologically correct, and though the lighting apparatus were inferior in make and capabilities.

"In those days, the scenes, costumes and lighting effects were all made by people in the particular theatre in which they had to be seen.

"And, until something of this kind is done again in the theatres, we shall never get back the feeling of unity.

"Now let us go into another room and see the models for the production of *The Tempest*, and also those for the production of the *Importance of Being Earnest*."

My visitor runs quickly ahead of me with awakened enthusiasm. We find there large models, made to scale and perfect in every detail, of every one of the eight necessary scenes for *The Tempest*. Each scene is on a separate stand which raises it to the level of the eyes. At the side of each stand is a table on which is every character appearing in that special scene,

each in his costume (or, if two or more costumes are needed for one character, then there are two or more copies of the figure). All these figures are marvellous little carvings and not merely toy things cut out of paper. The whole cut and fit of the costume and its full effect is apparent.

By turning a switch the scene is illuminated exactly as it will be illuminated on the larger stage. Two of the assistants now place the figures on the stage to show them up in their different groupings, while a third speaks the lines from the play. We thus witness an exact demonstration of the performance from the rise of the curtain to its fall, minus the inspiration, or talent, of the actor. That, of course, is the thing which either makes or mars the performance.

But while this is true, it is no less true that the very best actors cannot hold up the weight of a great play like the *Tempest* if they are surrounded by what is called noisy scenery, lighting or costumes, and if the stage manager has not understood and explained to his staff and performers the meaning of the play and the whole effect of the production. This meaning of the play is one of the things so often forgotten. A company of good actors may interpret certain passages of the play admirably, but the whole meaning and the whole impression of the play is often lost.

"But would you always produce the *Tempest* like this, with these eight scenes?" asks my visitor.

"By no means, Madam, and you have only to turn your head, and you will see another eight models, another set of figures, and another method of lighting; and if you care to wait, we will show you each of the situations you have just seen, only *interpreted* quite differently. We have no hard and fast rules in our experiments. We believe that the *Tempest* can be produced in ten or even a hundred different ways, and that each interpretation can be right.

"But there is one way that we do not trouble about; it is that way which pleases groundlings, by whom we by no means allude to those people who go to the pit. We are thinking of that vulgar and useless clique who seldom pay for their seats, and who generally do their best to decry anything that is at all intelligent and laud to the skies that which is foolish.

"If you will come over here, I will show you models for the production of the *Importance of Being Earnest*. You will see that the scene is very artificial, just as the play is artificial.

"This first scene is the interior of a bachelor's apartments; but it is more than that; it is such an apartment seen through the temperament of Wilde. Any jackass can *reproduce* one of the rooms in a West End flat, but it takes an artist—yes, it really takes an artist—to imagine and invent the apartment which Wilde saw and felt."

"But what about the study of acting?"

"My dear Madam, do you suppose that we should attempt to teach that which everyone has told us is unteachable? Miss Ellen Terry has said that acting is not to be taught, and many others have said so too, and we are entirely of their opinion. It cannot be taught.

"But what *can* be taught is this; how to walk from one side of the stage to the other; but that is moving—that is not acting. You can be taught how to move arms, legs and torso with expression; that is not acting—that again is moving. You can be taught how to move your face; you can even be taught how to move your soul, or, rather, how to allow your soul to move you; but this is still not acting. That comes under the head of movement. Then you can be taught how to produce your voice so that it reaches to every part of the building, and into the soul of the listener. You can be taught how not to speak, but all this is not acting; it is speaking.

"In fact, this school does not attempt to teach as you teach parrots. It attempts to give men the necessary equipment to produce a play from first to last. I have, for instance, designed scenes all my life, but I have never been *taught* that. I have produced plays all my life; but I have never been *taught* that. But I remember well there was a time in my life when I would have given much if I could have been shown how to do that which should lead to the producing of a play, that which should lead to the designing of scenes and that which should lead to the acting of a part.

"It is just for this reason that I call this a 'school of experiment.' When you experiment, you find out for yourself. At any other school you become like a parrot, and you imitate. The faculty for imitation is not what I want my school to develop—it is to *develop* the creative faculty. If you study how to copy accounts, how to write shorthand, how to make bricks, or any other work requiring diligent application only, you can be taught by careful directors; but if you attempt to teach even

so delicate an art as that of cooking, neither careful direction nor diligent application will achieve anything.

"This idea nowadays that all tasks undertaken can be likened one to another leads to confusion in the minds of workers in every branch. There are the workers with the hands, workers with the head, and workers with the soul; and the qualities of these three tasks are as separate as are the earth, the sea and the sky from one another. That which your hand learns, you can be taught; that which your head learns, you can only teach yourself; and that which your soul learns is God-sent.

"This school is to teach that which the hand can learn, and to experiment with the hand; it is also to make it possible for us to teach ourselves those things which the head can learn; and if we happen to have among our members one or more of those elect people whom the gods have taken the thought to teach, then so much the better.

"We may by good fortune do inspired work—but good or ill fortune, all our work shall be *thorough*."

Passion Spins the Plot

By R. A. Scott-James

THERE is literature which is as much above the average of "classic" literature as the ancient heroes were above men. There is so little of this heroic literature in the world, that the age which has failed to add to it need not write itself down a failure. However much some of the "classics" may go out of fashion, or men of a new epoch may boast originality and self-dependence, from that supreme literature they can never free themselves; some at least of its heroic quality they must seek among themselves, some essential kinship with the magicians will be looked for among their artists. I need not describe it further than to say that we find it for a certainty in Homer, in two at least of the Greek dramatists, in Dante, in Shakespeare, and probably in Goethe. It is objective, human, and, in varying degrees, philosophical; it is ideal (in a sense to be explained); and it is passionate even when, as in the case of Goethe, infinite labour of technique went to the making of it.

What was done in literature such as this was done once and for all; once done, it is never and could never be repeated. The "Agamemnon" of Æschylus, the "Paradise" of Dante, the "Lear" of Shakespeare, admit of no reproduction, no adequate imitation. Nevertheless they afford a standard of measurement which is rather a spiritual standard than a formal canon of æsthetics; for they carry us into an atmosphere which can be surely recognised when once it has been breathed. It is an atmosphere which enlarges our field of perception, enhances human values, and makes us set more store on personality. All great creative literature does that; anything that comes within its range is made more ample by the contact. If that happens in great measure, it is because it is literature of the heroic order; if it happens ever so little, still it is literature.

That it should at least happen "ever so little" we are bound to ask from writers of every age, including our own. We are compelled to look for some of that vehement fineness which emerges through passion. But perhaps that last word

only arouses disgust in some reader to whom it brings its modern degenerate associations. Just as the word "romance" is often degraded to signify no more than a petty love affair, so the word "passion" has been appropriated to the amorous, sexual preoccupation which is the only intense feeling of many jaded moderns. Humanity, however devitalised, however incapable of varied passions, does not lose the love passion so long as it has the animal instinct of the fly and the rudimentary human instinct to idealise. But a race must be strangely incurious if the only romance it can conceive is the romance of a youth and a maid, and its only passion the passion of sexual desire. Yet such is the state of mind—to judge by the common usage of words—of the major portion of modern society.

Needless to say I am not wishing to disparage the literature of love, whether it be poetry, fiction, or of any other kind. English people least of all can afford to belittle it, for if we eliminated it half of our best lyrical poetry would go. For we count it a distinction in English poetry that upon this theme the changes have been rung so finely and to such exquisite effect. But much of the fineness of love poetry is to be distinguished from the fineness of the emotion of love. Lovelace declares to his Lucasta :—

> True, a new mistress now I chase,
> The first foe in the field;
> And with a stronger faith embrace
> A sword, a horse, a shield.

That is in the true spirit of English love poetry, which does not so idealise the amorous passion as to make it, in the modern emasculate manner, a substitute for valour, faith, honour; it is not opposed to the manly virtues; it may be the song which a warrior sings to the clank of "a sword, a horse, a shield."

But let us for a moment examine this matter of passion which is so directly concerned with great creative literature. No acute physical pain or thrilling sensuous delight is ever dignified with the name of passion; the essence of passion is mental, or spiritual; emotion made intense by idealism turned in a definite direction, that is to say, by the idealising of an object which a man has set before himself. The meaning the word has acquired is almost the opposite of passivity; it implies a state of the soul in unrest, a state requiring action. Passion is a suffering where the mind assails the body and torments it with an ideal imperative; and it is the double tragedy of passion

that the will may not be strong enough, as in the case of Hamlet, to translate that imperative into action, and second, as we have it in Faust, that the object, when attained, proves to be not the thing that was desired. In a great passion the mind is set upon an object which it idealises beyond the possibility of complete satisfaction, and there is suffering because the will is thwarted and cheated of its ideal. Macbeth's passionate ambition to be a king, encouraged in him by the witches' chant, is an ambition for something that no being a king can satisfy; and the tragedy of his passion lies in the painful effort by which he wins his object and the painful disillusion when it turns to dust.

If this description is correct, the passions with which literature deals will run along the channels of those actions that we can idealise. The richest mind is that which can idealise activities in every direction, which can see what we call poetry in every sphere of life, which can read destiny in apparently petty desires, which widens the vision of life by seeing in every action man in relation to the Universe. The passions with which we shall be concerned must be limited by the bounds of our perceptive imagination; by those limited conditions under which we are capable of seeing and feeling things intensely. If we only see or feel ambition as a petty and sordid thing, in a petty and sordid person, we cannot make a tragic passion of ambition; if jealousy is a little vice with no more than small results it cannot be the theme of imaginative literature; if the religious ideal cannot be conceived as possessing the whole soul, we cannot appreciate the religious passion of a John Inglesant; if revenge is no more than spite there can be no Hamlet, nor a Lear if arrogance is unmixed with love and honour. If, to-day, the passion of love is treated more often than any other emotion, that is probably because the one capacity for intense experience, which never seems to desert the human race, is the capacity to identify the sex impulse with an ideal. The great artist is not confined to this one channel of idealism. He sees branching out in every direction all the human activities intensified or refined by a spirituality which the lesser person sees only under the stress of love. But this fact is to be noticed, that whether it is love of a woman, whether it is ambition, whether it is love of humanity, whether it is religious zeal, revenge, or anything else whatsoever on a great scale, passion implies idealism, an object set before the mind in its spiritual or

imaginative capacity, and that the intensity of the passion is enhanced by the difficulty of the quest.

Great passion, then, is a kind of critical union, or rather half-union, of body and soul. It is the perpetual effort of the body to become soul, the real to become ideal; the painful and ever frustrated effort of the individual to become universal, or, conversely, the painful condition of the human soul which sees its ideal shattered and its glory reduced to dust and ashes. Its character is a problem for religion no less than for æsthetics. It is Browning who declares:—

> But priests
> Should study passion; how else cure mankind,
> Who come for help in passionate extremes?

The dramatist and the novelist need no more than the power to create such a passion; for the greater includes the less; it is not achieved in art, unless plot, narrative, style and all the subsidiary devices have served to expose it in its reality and its intensity. This is presumably what Dumas *père* meant in the lines which Henley quotes from him: "All *he* wanted was 'four trestles, four boards, two actors, and a passion.'" The passionate hero either strains towards an idealised object, or he still proclaims his yearning after the ideal by the lamentations with which he curses his ill-fate. Throughout Greek tragedy there is an undercurrent of protest against inexorable Fate which sets itself against the realisation of the ideal. The passion of Prometheus sums up the perpetual agony of the human race in its perpetual striving to rise beyond its limitations. The tragic irony of the Greeks is but the expression of the tragedy of passion in its pitiful reaction from hope, the intensity of feeling with which men see desire defeated and ideal unattainable. So, too, in the most intense moments the characters of Shakespeare become ironical:—

> Misery makes Sport to mock itself.

And we can readily understand, what some persons have thought strange, that Ophelia's language should become coarse, like Lear's, in the full tide of bitterness. It is the reaction after the perception of a spiritual beauty. The beauty seems broken; the earth and its foulness remain, and the anguished spirit sees the foulness exaggerated by contrast with its ideal. Lear, who had seen his daughters as paragons, sees them now as centaurs; he, who has adored their filial devotion,

compares them now to the most obscene things which can besmirch the sight; nothing is too shameful to express the fall from that ideal.

We see, then, why it is that the highest forms of literature are necessarily concerned with pain. It is not merely that art requires intensity of feeling, and that the emotion of pain is the most intense we know. It is because the highest literature must necessarily be concerned with human beings in their most profound aspirations, in their most deeply experienced strivings each after his own ideal, according to his own conception of what will satisfy him; and it is because in the nature of things such an ideal is more than experience can satisfy, that the anguish of striving and the anguish of failure are the subjects of art. A play such as Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* can never be regarded as great drama. Amid scenes of magnificence and splendid savage rhetoric Tamburlaine passes on from triumph to triumph, the incarnation of the conquering will. There are numberless detached passages of what we may call lyrical poetry—for a lyrical poem expresses no more than a moment's mood, a single phase of the sequence which is passion. But there is no passionate sequence in *Tamburlaine*; it is a monotonous record of much vaunted triumphs. We do not feel the painful struggle; there is no prospect of defeat; there is no storm and stress of an ideal at stake, a human being battered by circumstance. We may, if we are brutal enough, bow down before Tamburlaine's Juggernaut car; but he does not touch our emotions; he is not a tragic hero. Tragedy has no interest in supermen; unless, indeed, like Chapman's Bussy d'Ambois, the hero has the courage of the superman with the limitations of the rest of humanity.

But if the superman is not a possible subject for great art, neither is the crawling earthworm. Many modern authors and critics seem to consider that because tragic passion is always painful, therefore pain is the essential thing in tragedy. It is this grossly false assumption that is responsible for many disasters in contemporary literature; it is the deep-lying error in much of our so-called "intellectual drama" and "intellectual fiction." I have heard authors and critics complain that the public will not read certain books or go to certain plays because they are "painful," or "grim." If they had said, "because they are *passionate*," I should have understood the complaint. Pain without passion may be scientifically interesting, but it

has no artistic content, no high emotional significance. Indeed, it is not true to suppose that the public dislikes the spectacle of the painful or the ugly. All know something of the fascination which disturbed Leontius, the son of Aglaion, who coming up from the Piræus observed dead bodies on the ground; and desiring to look at them and loathing the thought opened his eyes wide, exclaiming, "There, you witches, take your fill of the horrid sight!" If anyone doubts this let him recall that a painful and sordid episode in the law-courts fascinates the public just as it is fascinated by the crude villainies of East-end melodrama; and that the most highly moralised sections of the public can be stirred to attend to the persecution of Congo natives or Macedonian Christians only by the most appalling stories of massacre, outrage and various forms of extreme suffering.

Surely it is not because they are concerned with painful subjects that many of the "intellectual" dramatists have failed—failed, I mean, not only with the very ignorant public, but also with more discriminating audiences. In some cases, which it is not my business here to specify, they have failed because the authors have set their hearts on a problem outside the subject of their art, and the art has suffered in consequence; for only disinterested art has the power to move us. In some cases they have failed because the authors have held theories which I believe to be fatal to literature. The narrow view of what is called Realism has been an adjunct to intellectual faddism and propagandism, and has served to sterilise literature. The great Realists have never been mere Realists; they have never thought that to produce art it is sufficient merely to reproduce fact. The word "Truth" has been introduced in the most shameless fashion. It is true that there are men without arms and legs and noses, but to delineate such a creature with exquisite accuracy is not to produce a faithful rendering of life. It is true that there are drab, sordid, expressionless lives, without happiness, without hope, without ideals. To describe these lives in all their miserable detail may be of infinite value for social and reforming purposes. It may be the positive duty of every one of us to study these sores in the body politic for the existence of which we are collectively responsible. It may be craven cowardice not to open our eyes wide to these painful and hideous facts, which cry out to be removed and prevented. And if any person whose enthusiasm in life it is to abolish them hits

upon an artistic device for calling attention to them, he is fully justified by his object. But let us nevertheless be frank about the matter. His object is the removal of abuses. To stir emotions in a fine way is not his primary end and aim; it is for him only a means to something else. We are not condemning him when we say that his object is not the object of the creative artist, who is concerned with life not in its partial aspects, but as a whole. But he on his part has no right to complain if he fails. The "truth" with which he is concerned is a scientific case, not an artistic truth. He has failed to stir our emotions because the attempt to stir emotions was only a dodge on his part; he was playing a trick on us, for a laudable end, and if we are not taken in the fault is not ours.

Drama, fiction, poetry and the other fine arts cannot tolerate even the noblest form of insincerity. There is here no arbitrary dogma or canon of art, but merely an assertion of the simple fact that you cannot achieve two wholly different ends at one and the same time, that success is dependent upon singleness of aim and enthusiasm. It is true that there is no subject whatsoever that may not lend itself to treatment. But it must be treated for its own sake, disinterestedly. Literature will not move us greatly unless it is concerned with great emotions. It will not move us finely except in the presence of an ideal. For we have seen that in the great passions of literature, as in the great passions of life, there is always an ideal at stake, an ideal that is more than the attainable, a grasping at a fullness of satisfaction which is more than experience can afford.

I am making no appeal for what is misunderstood by the term "Art for Art's sake," or for that typically French view the expression of which I may take from the younger Dumas's *Affaire Clemenceau.*

> Savez-vous ce que c'est que l'art ? C'est le Beau dans le vrai, et, d'après ce principe, l'art s'est créé des règles absolus, que vous chercheriez en vain dans la nature seule. Si la nature seule pouvait le satisfaire, vous n'auriez qu'à mouler un beau modèle de la tête aux pieds, pour faire un chef d'œuvre. Or, si vous exécutiez cette idée, vous ne produiriez qu'un grotesque. Le talent consiste à compléter la nature, à recueillir çà et lá ses indications marveilleuses, mais partielles, à les résumer dans un ensemble homogène et à donner à cet ensemble une pensée ou un sentiment, puisque nous pouvons lui donner une âme.

I am in sympathy with that view so far as it implies that the artist cannot be content with a slavish reproduction of isolated facts taken from nature; and that he sets his gaze upon *le Beau dans le vrai*, which I should like to render, not the "Beautiful in

the true," but the " Ideal in the true." But I am not in sympathy with it so far as it implies a formal beauty which the artist discerns in accordance with a principle mysteriously and exclusively artistic, existing in a region remote from life. Art is not a sacred mystery into which only the initiated can penetrate. It is not concerned with beauties drawn from a peculiar and exclusive artistic Absolute. Literature deals with life, but with life in an intense manifestation, with that passionate life which attains its richness, its breadth, its tremendous lustiness through the desire for something more than normal life can give. Nobody can object that these ideals are not real, that they are not true to life, and indeed the most vital part of life. The passions they call forth in men are the most real, the most vivid, the most illuminating; they widen and refine experience; they bring us into a larger universe, they add to the stature of personality, they are the means of growth.

Literature, then, is an expansion of the mind out of the narrower truth into the larger. It despises no experience, but drags to light its hidden resources, its unexpected wealth. It is profoundly interested in experience on its intense, that is to say, its passionate side. The original mind, not content to find poetic value in a single emotion such as that of love, finds it on all sides, discovering interests here, there, and everywhere. If it concentrates on one of these for the purposes of a poem, a play, a novel, it neglects, of course, no adventitious aid which gives reality to the persons, sufficiency to their motives, contrast, relief, atmosphere—all that is expressed by the ordinary jargon of criticism. To sum up: great creative literature does not deal with things painful or otherwise merely because they are facts of life. Its business is the intensification of life, to bring home to us its myriad finenesses; it achieves this end by presenting persons passing through the intense experiences which we call passions; and these are conditions of the spirit in which an idealised object encourages, thwarts or tantalises the seeker, and dejects him utterly if the reality turns out to be less than the ideal. The inquiry opens a question which is one not for this essay, but for the metaphysician—What is the source of this ideal element which enters into every object passionately sought, and so transcends realisation that the object cannot be attained without a sense of loss?

Navy Discontents

By Stephen Reynolds

Some men will drive a motor car for years without ever troubling to learn so much as the construction of their engine; others can sail a boat excellently, yet have never even learnt how to splice a rope; and all goes well, as a rule, till something goes wrong. Then they are done. Although such a limitation of interest is hard to understand, it is very much on a par with the attitude of the British nation towards the British Navy. Lord Fisher was wonderfully clever at taking advantage of it in order to gain his own way. "Here's the money," the nation says in effect. "Rule Britannia! Is all well?" And through its official and journalistic spokesmen the Navy replies, "Ay, ay, sirs! You may sleep in your beds." But if, instead of cheap naval heroics, the nation could hear the actual talk of its bluejackets among themselves and their friends; if, behind the elaborate stage-management of the Navy, the nation could see something of the real life of the actors, it would be most unpleasantly surprised, not to say flustered. "Look at the money we are spending," the nation would complain. "'Tis precious little of it *we* ever get," the bluejacket would reply. "It all makes more work for us, but what's our pay? One and eightpence a day, the same as it always was, and provide your own uniform." "But we didn't know you had to buy your own uniform." "There's a hell of a lot about the Navy that *you* don't know!" would probably be the bluejacket's retort. And for anyone who believes that the Navy, besides being a weapon, is the finest material expression of the English spirit, nothing is more disheartening, more disillusionising, than the ordinary unfettered talk of the lower deck. Argue as one will on the Navy's behalf—I have argued myself for hours together with bluejackets and their friends in an endeavour to make the best of things—there can be no doubt whatever of the discontent. Mr. Lionel Yexley might be dubbed a specialist in naval discontent, but he certainly has not exaggerated in his

article on *Courts-Martial and Other Things: A Plea for Enquiry* :—*

> The British Navy is steering straight ahead to another crisis in its history: when the crisis will come no man can say. All crises are precipitated by a combination of untoward events, but the material for a crisis must be there, otherwise the untoward events dissipate harmlessly. The material for a Naval crisis is there piled up, with the pile growing larger and larger. . . . Now it comes our turn to speak out, as a prolonged silence would be a sin of omission. The Navy is reeking with discontent, which grows day by day, and which if not fairly met must end in explosion.

Notwithstanding more small outbreaks of insubordination than are ever reported in the newspapers, there is no cause to say that mutiny is in the wind. But there exists in the Navy, not only among the so-called bad characters, not only among the lower ratings, an amount of fermentation, of ill-will, of unwilling work, of pull-dog pull-devil—of suppressed or potential mutinous feeling, in short—which for every reason, that of efficiency not the least, ought to be remedied. Whether justified or not, there it is; and the fact of its existence is the fact that has to be reckoned with. It may be explained, but it can't be explained away.

It is not good that staid men, petty officers with the pay and privileges of their rating, should be counting the days till their discharge, like children during their first term at school. It is not good that many high-spirited young men should have their ambitions broken, should so soon adopt a hell-about-it tone, should join the scramble for soft jobs, and although well able should refuse to qualify for promotion, either because they are already sick of their work, or else because promotion would mean remaining longer in the Service. It is bad that there should be so much difference between "happy ships" and ships that are "proper sad," between officers who are never named without curses and officers who are "jonnick." It is worse, if anything, that the conversation of bluejackets ashore should only too often consist of one long bitter grumble. The number of men who desert or buy themselves out, or who even go so far as to obtain their discharge in the form of a couple of years' hard labour and subsequent dismissal for an offence committed on purpose, is proof sufficient that the grumbling is not simply

* *The Fleet Annual and Naval Year-Book*, 1911. Compiled by Lionel Yexley. Mr. Yexley, editor of the lower-deck newspaper, *The Fleet*, and author of *The Inner Life of the Navy* (an outspoken book much better reviewed than taken to heart), has done service both as seaman and coastguard. He threw up his career and pension in order to speak his mind, and he has succeeded remarkably well in doing so.

idle talk. If these are ways they have in our Navy, then it is humiliating to us all.

Here let me say that we are far from wishing either to play the alarmist or to attack the Admiralty, which itself is in the nation's service, and is what the nation makes it. For those of us who have many friends on the lower deck, it is more a matter of indignation than of alarm that a country which pays so dearly for its ships of steel should hold so cheap its men of flesh and blood. The duty of the nation towards its bluejackets ought not to stop at boasting about them, paying them as little as possible, standing them drinks, and subscribing towards Miss Weston's temperance work.

Certainly it is difficult for the country at large to know much of life on the lower deck. The Navy is, so to speak, a nation within a nation, whose inner workings are as difficult for an outsider to follow as the inner workings of, say, a foreign parliament. One would need to be in it and of it in order to know its life thoroughly, and then, probably, one would be too much in the thick of it to look around the situation as well as at it. "The silent Navy" it is called, implying that it works instead of chatters. "Gagged" would be just as correct. It is against Regulations to discuss Service matters outside the Service; as much as a man's career is worth if he is found out. Moreover, although in these days hardly anything can be done without combination and organisation, Article 10 of the Admiralty Instructions still holds, except, apparently, in the case of admirals :—

> All combinations of persons belonging to the Fleet formed for the purpose of bringing about alterations in the existing Regulations or Customs of His Majesty's Naval Service, whether affecting their interests individually or collectively, are prohibited, as being contrary to the traditions and practice of the Service and injurious to its welfare and discipline.

More than once I have heard fathers say to their sons (not without a certain amount of satisfaction), "You won't be able to speak to them in the Navy like you've spoke to me before now. You mustn't even speak up for yourself when you're put upon and in the right. Just you mind that. You'll be a marked man if you do. The way to get on in the Navy is to lie low, whatever happens, and jog along quiet, and take what comes, glad that it isn't no worse." Practically all the information which appears in newspapers has either been filtered through the quarter-deck, or else has been written up by "the likes o'

they." On many points of supreme importance to the lower deck the Press is most discreetly silent or short-winded. And in any case, the petty grievances which all accumulate in men's lives to produce a deep sense of injury, are apt by themselves, on paper, to seem very flat and petty. "What a small thing," one says, "to make such a fuss about!" forgetting that it is one of many small things—the last straw, perhaps, which is breaking the camel's back.

Quite apart from the fact that lower-deck grievances are tending to become explosive, there is this much of great interest to note: the more the grievances are analysed, the plainer it appears that the causes of them lie in a large measure outside the Navy, though operating within. In some respects the trouble arises out of the clash between conditions in the Service and in the outside world; in other respects it is a reflection, in an exaggerated form, of similar troubles outside. Not all the grievances are the Navy's fault, nor can they all be remedied unless or until they are remedied by and in the country at large. That is a point, it seems to me, which is overlooked both by the lower deck and by such spokesmen as it possesses.

First of all, mere grumbling for the sake of grumbling may be put aside. We know that the Navy, like *Punch*, never is what it used to be. Seamen have the reputation of great grumblers, and small wonder they grumble, seeing that they endure more risks and hardships than landsmen for less pay! "Sith navigation is the meane whereby countryes are discovered, and communitie drawne between nation and nation. . . and that by Navigation commonweales through mutuall trade are not only susteined, but mightely enriched, with how great esteeme ought the painefull Seaman to be embraced by whose hard adventures such excellent benefites are atcheived, for by his exceeding great hazzards. . . countries and people are apparently made known unto us."* But the contrary is the case in practice, when it comes to dealing with seamen and taking advantage of their political and economic helplessness.

It is natural, too, that men who joined the Navy as youths, before they had much experience of life, should blame the Service for a good deal which is common to life everywhere.

Due allowance being made for those two sources of grumbling we come to the genuine grievances, which fall, broadly speaking, under the two heads of pay and discipline: the question of pay

* *The Seaman's Secrets*, by John Davis, the Elizabethan Navigator.

being governed very largely by outside conditions, and that of discipline being more directly an affair of Service regulations and tradition.

Stinginess in dealing with the men is, indeed, almost inevitable from the economic position of the Navy. It needs vast sums of money, and in order to get them from Parliament it is bound to bulk largely in the public eye, to keep the country in a state of naval enthusiasm—to advertise itself, in short. And it does advertise itself exceedingly well. But for advertising purposes, huge new ships, even if undermanned, which can be photographed, measured, pitted on paper against those of other navies, and gushed over in the Press—splendid creatures of steel with nerves of electricity, which can be seen with the eye at great, expensive, spectacular naval reviews—they give much better value for the money obtainable than a more or less invisible increase in the welfare of the men. Thus the nation is induced to play the naval game with a generous gusto, and a vicious circle is established—more money wanted, more ships to get it; more money obtained, more ships built with it. What might be called strategic expenses are also mounting up. Contractors don't die poor. Hence the men are the very last to feel the benefit of what money can be screwed out of the Exchequer, and the Navy becomes like a man who just succeeds in maintaining a large household by skimping his servants; only the Navy has the additional advantage that its servants can't leave when they like, are liable to imprisonment if they kick against it, and dare not openly appeal to public opinion.

In consequence, although the soldier has had his pay raised and receives for his kit an allowance out of which, with care, he can save money, the seaman's pay remains the same as ever, namely, one and eightpence a day, eleven and eightpence a week. Out of that he has to clothe himself, according to regulations which can be made very vexatious, and he has to meet all his other expenses, not the least of them being the need of titbits from the canteen in order to vary the monotony and coarseness of sea cooking. That is to say, while the standard of living in the outside world has become constantly more expensive, and the purchasing power of money has decreased, the bluejacket's pay has remained stationary. How can the shoe do otherwise than pinch? It is true that good-conduct badges and the like will add a few pence extra a day; it is true that he may look forward to a pension—as who should not who contracts to sell

his life? Nevertheless, it becomes more and more difficult to save, although the men show a greater disposition to do so; and pensions are harder to get. What, again, can a man send home to his wife, even if he is a petty officer earning just over a pound a week? Forty shillings a month, perhaps, to keep a home going! Seamen, one hears it said, ought not to marry. They sometimes say it themselves. But that is to render unfertile thousands of picked men, and the results of enforced singleness on young seamen in the pink of bodily condition, on leave in seaport towns, are not hard to imagine. The returns for venereal diseases form one of the little, or rather big, matters which the newspapers fail to publish at length, if at all. The advertisements in Service and port journals tell their own tale. And after marriage . . . All honour to seamen's wives for managing so well as most of them do, by letting lodgings and going out to work! Which is not, however, to say that distressing matrimonial affairs don't occur with only too great a frequency. Here a grass-widow, as the phrase goes, puts out the broom; there a man, returning home from a foreign station, is met by friends to tell him his wife has gone away. I don't propose to retail the scandals that come under one's own notice, nor do I think one should cast stones at the guilty parties.

It is said, of course, that to a bluejacket's pay the value of his board and lodging should be added. Admitting that the value of his food is an item to be added, it is only fair to deduct again from that total the money of his own that he is practically obliged to spend on extra food. And as to the lodging, what is the value of a lodging in which he is always under discipline, and of a bed from which he may be called out or kept out at any hour of the day or night? Night work is on the increase.

As Mr. Yexley points out, the pay of the lower ratings would not so much matter if promotion were fairly rapid and sure. But the personnel has remained within four thousand of the same figure (127,100—131,000) since 1904. Promotion lags, and men are kept waiting for it long after they have qualified. An A.B. for instance, of seven year's service, a good seaman, belonging to a family of good seamen, whom I coached myself, last year, in arithmetic for his leading seaman's examination, and who passed pretty easily, is still waiting for his leading seaman's rate and pay, although meantime he has been set to do leading seaman's work. "To-day," says Mr. Yexley, "men remain eight, ten, or even twelve years in the lower ranks,

whereas a few years ago it was only two, three, or five. And the pay remains the same in spite of the fact that the conditions of service demand much higher qualifications than of old. The present A.B. is a skilled mechanic, who has to pass both educational and professional tests before he can attain to the rating, tests that were undreamed of by his predecessors of only a few years ago, while he is doomed to remain on the lower rung of the ladder, through no fault of his own, for perhaps a decade."*

Excessively slow promotion, like the short-service system (without which, promotion for those who do mean to stay in the Navy would probably be slower still) puts into the men a devil-may-care spirit. "The starry blankers don't care whether 'tis Christmas or Easter!" complain the petty officers, who are buffers in fact as well as, some of them, buffers in nickname, between the commander who wants the work done, and seamen who either won't or can't do it. The petty officers are held responsible; once they dip, *i.e.*, are disrated, which happens pretty easily in some ships, they can seldom regain their old rate; and thus the discontent is spread from the lower ratings to the higher. Frequently I have tried to persuade petty officers to aim at warrant rank. "Not me!" they all reply. "Why, that'd mean staying in the Service till I'm an old man. I'm going to —— off out of it as soon as ever I'm entitled to my discharge."†

Lower-deck promotion to commissioned rank is a thing one would very much like to see. In this year's *Fleet Annual* there is an able appeal for it, together with a carefully worked-out scheme. But I cannot say that I have ever myself come across any great enthusiasm for it amongst bluejackets. They seem to feel that the gap between quarter-deck and lower-deck, and their respective points of view, is too wide; that it corresponds

* A recent Admiralty order, creating a class of "exceptional" men for first promotion, admits as much; although, apart from those exceptional men it does nothing to remedy the present state of affairs.

† That is to say, "to my discharge with a pension." The fact that a considerable percentage both of seamen and of stokers re-engage for a further period after their twelve years, is not so contradictory as it may seem at first sight. The reasons they give themselves are usually: that having served for so many years, they may as well do a few years longer for a pension, for otherwise, if they came out without any pension, the years that they have already done would be as good as lost; or, that they couldn't find a shore job to drop into, and so were driven back to the Navy; or else, frankly, that routine life in the Service had unfitted them for the more irregular shore jobs, such as fishing. On the other hand, the men who serve the longer time and come out with a pension, obtain employment ashore all the more easily, because employers, especially in the country, take advantage of their pension to pay them a lower rate of wages than men without pensions could live on.

too closely with a similar gap in civil life ; and that the relations of the two decks being as they are at present, it would be the duty of a promoted seaman to round on his own sort. The lower deck has an *esprit de corps* of its own, and the general verdict appears to be that lower-deck promotion to commissioned rank is a thing which ought to be feasible, but is not. At the same time, however, it may be noted that the scheme given in the *Fleet Annual* appears to meet many, if not most, of the objections.

In more than one way, the transformation of fighting ships into huge boxes of intricate machinery, combined with the state of the labour market, has acted to the disadvantage of the seaman branch. The greater the proportion of artificers in a ship's company, the smaller must be the number of seamen left to do the general cleaning and so forth—the housemaid work of the ship. Hence the necessary work comes heavier on those who remain to do it. And although the artificers keep in order their own pieces of mechanism, the seamen, already diminished in number, have the extra work of cleaning up their messes after them. Nor is that the only or the most galling disadvantage. I have before me an advertisement which has been appearing in Devon newspapers :—

> ROYAL NAVY.—Wanted for immediate entry, ENGINE-ROOM ARTIFICERS (Fitters and Turners), age 21 to 28 ; commencing pay, 38s. 6d. per week.—Apply at once, to Admiralty Recruiting Office, 9, Goldsmith Street, Exeter.

That is to say, the Admiralty is offering those young artificers, from the day they join, half as much again as the pay of a chief petty officer, and about as much as the maximum pay of a chief stoker. In a chief petty officer's mess one is rather surprised, as a rule, to see several youngsters with red braid on their uniforms. They are electricians and the like. Why should they be paid more than any seaman, and take precedence of men who were in the Navy when they were babies ? Of course, the seamen ask that question, without always hitting upon the right answer. The Navy requires specially trained men to run and repair its more delicate pieces of mechanism, and such men can earn good wages outside. Therefore, it seems, the Admiralty is compelled to offer them high pay and privileges in order to attract them into the Service. Whereas a seaman can earn little enough outside, and a stoker not very much more. There is not the same external compulsion to pay their branches well. The seamen point out with some force that so long as a battleship

goes to sea at all, it is the executive branch, that is to say themselves, which navigates it and prevents the whole box of tricks, artificers included, from going to the bottom. They resent not so much the pay and privileges of the artificers as the action of the Admiralty in taking advantage of the labour market to continue paying its seamen badly. And, in fact, rightly or wrongly, that is their common opinion of the Admiralty in its relations with its men: that it is not straight, let alone generous, in its dealings; that it takes away with one hand what it pretends to give with the other; that it uses to the full its power to drive hard bargains with bound men. Such accusations, whether just or not, imply a certain failure on the Admiralty's part in the treatment of its men.

Naval discipline contrasts with, rather than depends on, outside conditions. Outside, we have become more and more democratic, in appearances at all events. But naval discipline was set up and stereotyped in the days when seamen were sea-labourers, shipped like merchant crews for single commissions; the riff-raff of our ports, many of them, who had, literally, to be knocked into shape. Nowadays, the seaman is a trained specialist, a man of the same order of intelligence, if not of the same education, as his officers. Yet he is still subject to the same old discipline.

Mr. Yexley gives a table of the summary punishments for the year 1909:—

	Seamen Class.	Non-Seamen Class.	Marines Afloat.	Marines Ashore.
No. of punishments	.. 56,940	.. 43,278	.. 12,520	.. 1,113
No. of men ..	.. 42,125	.. 48,727	.. 11,762	.. 6,596

Further, he quotes from the letter of a naval officer to *The Fleet*:—

> . . . but what about the unrecorded punishments? Could you only get behind the scenes in every ship of the Fleet, and cast your eyes over the books recording the fancy and illegal punishments awarded in practically every ship and establishment of the Service, punishments which are purposely kept out of the official returns, so that any particular ship, or, I might say, commanding officer, should avoid being relieved of his command, the total would be swollen to (by ?) 100 per cent.

Mr. Yexley's own remarks, strong though they are, can scarcely outdo these two extracts:—

> The seamen afloat are helots—"names, just names"—who can only be kept in order—"disciplined"—by a system of punish and drive . . . The naval officer from very early days is fed on ancient traditions till he looks on the naval seaman of to-day from exactly the same point of view as his predecessor of a hundred and fifty years ago did on the seaman of his day.

> But while all naval laws, regulations, and customs belong to the past, the *personnel* lives very much in the present. When the seaman's main duty was to pull on ropes or black down-rigging, it may have been possible to drive him from pillar to post and punish him if he did not get from one to the other quick enough, but you cannot drive men to shoot straight with modern ordnance; you cannot drive men to manipulate wireless apparatus, torpedoes, submarines, etc., etc. These all require not brawn, but applied and cultivated intelligence. That is what the State demands from the modern naval seaman, and gets; it employs him during the day at work which calls for the full use of his cultivated intelligence, then it will take him and stand him in a dark corner for two hours each night because he did not have his cap on straight or dared to wear a waist-belt to keep his trousers up (10A). No one seems to realise that this is an outrage—it was done a hundred years ago, why not to-day? As well argue: "I stood my son in the corner in his nursery days, why should not I do it now he is a man?"

As against the alleged necessity of such a system, Mr. Yexley gives a photograph of *H.M.S. Foam*, a destroyer which ended a two years' commission on the Mediterranean Station without a solitary case of leave-breaking or a single petty offence against discipline; and which, among her sixty-three hands, had 153 good-conduct badges.

There between, the truth seems to lie. It is not to be supposed that all naval officers are bad. The obsolete system, the tradition, is at fault; half the trouble is caused by the jonties, that is to say the ship's police, who in origin belong to the men. A just disciplinarian is always respected. Some officers, who know how to interpret the old regulations according to modern needs are nothing less than beloved by their men. "He's a rare chap," one hears of such an one. "A proper gentleman, with no damn'd swank!" "A b——y toff!" "A heller to bark, but, bless you, his bite's as harmless as a sucking baby's!" The point is, that those officers who like so to use their position, and to fall back on the letter of the Regulations, can worry the men out of their lives, and then break them altogether for resenting the treatment. Officers of that sort may not be very numerous; certainly not so numerous as they used to be; but it doesn't take many flies instead of currants to make a cake uneatable. The Portsmouth affair of "Down on the knee, you dogs!" (which, correctly or not, was the common version of the order) caused a blaze of excitement throughout the Navy, not on account of that order alone, but because men felt that in general they *were* looked upon as dogs. Particular resentment is expressed against young midshipmen who bullyrag boat's crews of twice their experience, and then put them in the report for objecting to carry out orders which are bad seamanship. Whilst a battleship in which there had been considerable trouble over leave-stopping, was lying at anchor

off the town in which I write, one of her boats was sent ashore on a day when it was unfit for any boat to be beached, let alone a Navy boat. In shoving off again, a bluejacket fell, damaging the boat and some of her gear. It was an accident which might have happened to the best of surf-men. Notwithstanding which, the unfortunate man was heavily punished. The spiritless, careless bearing of the men aboard that ship, and her general lack of smartness, was plain to see when one rowed out around her. Shortly afterwards we saw the mother of a bluejacket whose leave had been stopped, through his own fault, approach the skipper of another battleship when he came ashore, asking that her son might have special leave to see his invalid father. Many officers would have held to discipline, but that particular skipper granted the leave, and his wife—who was much admired because she could hop into and out of a beached boat better than any of the ship's officers—spoke pleasantly to the woman. If they could have heard the buzz of talk over their kindness they would have felt, I think, more than thanked.

Those are illustrations to hand of a difference which ought not to exist. In the interests of naval efficiency, excuses for accident are not accepted either from officers or men; but the men take notice that after an officer has been dismissed his ship, he waits a while, and gets another; whereas a man sent to prison is finished with. Courts-martial fall between the two stools of homely common sense and proper judicial procedure; hence the lower-deck saying, that they exist not to try, but to punish. Courts of law are by no means perfect; working people don't deceive themselves on that point; they know very well that the man who can hire the best lawyer has the best chance. But the Navy is a place where social injustices and inequalities, held in leash outside by public opinion, can be carried fully into effect. "Aye!" one hears, "and that's what their sort would like to do to us that isn't in the Service. An't 'ee ever know'd 'em try? Only *we* should tell 'em off pretty quick. But in the Navy, you see, they've got 'em under their thumb, in the same ship, day and night, and can do wi' 'em what they're minded."

Nevertheless, things are changing, there too. Officers work with their men; their own promotion—of a gunnery lieutenant, for instance—partly depends on them. When more officers *feel* with the men, and the men realise better their officers' troubles and difficulties; when officers and men shall have become

fellow-men, willing co-partners, each doing the work that fits him best, in a great service, then the Navy will have made a big stride forward.

At present the Admiralty seems to be out of touch with its men, and still more with those seafaring communities which supply the best of them. A tale is often told among Service people of how a high officer went aboard a ship and demanded volunteers for a landing party which expected tough and dangerous work. An order was given for good-conduct men to fall in on deck. "Who are these?" said the officer. "Where are your bad characters? Fall *them* in. I want men who can fight!" Strictly true or not, the popularity of the yarn and the approval which always greets it, show that the attempt to force Sunday-school standards upon the Navy, in place of the old standards of action, has not succeeded. A little drunkenness, a little leave-breaking—what about it, they say, if the man can fight? Reckless men for desperate work: always was and always will be!

That is still the popular sentiment, and it tells equally against those men who creep up the Service by means of their ability to pass examinations. Those of us who have passed many examinations know what a gamble they are, and know also the type of man who does best. So do bluejackets. The mere examinees who jump over their heads give rise to much dissatisfaction.

It is useless to say that every man is a free agent either to enter the Navy or not to do so, and having entered into the contract must make the best of it. Working people are not such shallow psychologists. They face the fact that the Navy calls to all that is best and most high-spirited in a youth, before he has had much experience of life, and that once there, he is bound to it for a term of years. Hence the ease in recruiting. In the old days of hand-to-hand fighting, men would fight for fighting's sake when their blood was up. But modern warfare, carried on in death-traps, with scientific instruments of destruction, is even more a matter of nerves than of animal pluck. Therefore, goodwill is more than ever needful. Besides which, it hurts one's pride in the Navy that the lower deck should reek with discontent.

Plays of the Month

"Bunty pulls the strings"
"Le Mariage de Mlle. Beulemans"

THERE are two very excellent things on the stage just now—one French, the other Scottish—little comedy pictures of life, which the jaded playgoers of London should not miss, and they are both ridiculously similar. *Bunty*, the Scottish play, is a replica of *What Every Woman Knows*—Barrie sentiment, an ending of sugar-plums, the whole affair pirouetting around the graces and canniness of the little minx, "Bunty," who pulls the strings of the family in early Victorian times; whereas in the French play it is Suzanne who does the "Hilda Trevelyan" act, only in the French way, which of course is not our playwright's way, and by no means that of Bunty. Still, there they are: Mlle. Legrand, very sweet, true, charming, a real artist; and Bunty, who in her black ringlets and crinolines, her piping, arresting, almost feline voice, her little manners and business, is a discovery and a delight. The French lady is *pimpante*, coaxing, impudent, full of sex and innocence. Bunty is equally adorable; dainty, weenie, awfully cantie and delicious, and the two represent two civilisations, and it would be difficult to decide which is the best.

These two ladies are the best things in the two plays, but they are not all; nor, by any means, the only things that count. The French play is incomparably the best comedy of the two, and has very considerable artistic merit. There is no need to tell the story. Like the Scottish play, it is a study of manners, a comedy of *genre*, a picture play of types and characteristics in which the bourgeois vulgarities of Belgian speech play no small part. It is wrapped up in pretty sentiment, and its object is to represent a picture of bourgeois Belgian life. It is altogether delightful. In *Bunty* there is much less art, and the humour is sardonic, whereas in the French play it would seem spontaneous and ingenuous. In both plays the acting is extraordinarily good. The Beulemans of M. Jacque is one of the

most amusing studies of an old bourgeois ever done ; the young men are good ; the whole thing, which was a prodigious success in Paris, is quite a revelation of comedy possibility, never vulgar, never even farcical—just genuine light, artless comedy. *Bunty* has no such touch, it is true. Its features are wooden, there is little story, little art ; but there is fun—honest, pawky fun, and a strangely fascinating atmosphere. Its joy lies chiefly in that. At times it reminds one of *Sumurun*, of the splendid processional scene, only it is Scotland, and the period is that of the anti-macassar. They issue from the kirk, weird, wonderful folk ; the women all with tiny parasols and funny little bonnets, white stockinged, crinolined, ringleted, braced up for the Sabbath ; and by and by the gaffers of the place come out, wheezy old gentlemen, each wrapped up in his plaid shawl, the one policeman in plain clothes, as droll a type as the janitor in *Sumurun*, the wee highlander and his lassie, the crooked-back shepherd with such a beautiful sheep-dog, Bunty and the uncouth joiner she intends to marry—in short a whole procession of types, each droller than the last—people of Harry Lauder's imaginings— and there they are " for a' that." Scotch (I'm tired of writting Scottish) isn't the word : it's butter-scotch. Rather like the Irish players, these people too, in voice and method, admirably drilled, everyone of them working for the whole. The thing is fresh, cheery, a little unkind to bonny Scotland perhaps—and one always laughs when it is most unkind—but then Scotland is on top on the London stage ; and the author, too, is a Scotchman. There are two delightful evenings to be spent in this way ; the one to see how the French poke fun at the foibles of their kind, how deftly, how artistically they do it ; the other to see how exceedingly droll and pleasing is the humour of these kith of ours above the border, who are not supposed to have any.

Books of the Month

ESSAYS AND BELLES-LETTRES

THE PAINTERS OF JAPAN. By ARTHUR MORRISON. T. C. and E. C. Jack.

The years seem to pass away awfully quickly. Alas, I feel this more so since I passed my thirtieth. It is nearly five years since my brotherly friend Hara left London!

About two years age he wrote a long letter in which he said ". . . . now we have two German scholars in Japan. Evidently they studied the Japanese language while they were in their own country enough to master it. They are sent by the German Government, and they care not any amount of expense for the sake of studying the old Japanese arts. Their achievements are simply wonderful. Once or twice I have met with them and discussed about the Japanese arts. To my great astonishment they understand the Japanese arts far more than the average of the Japanese students. How very eager they are! I would not be surprised if Germany becomes the greatest connoisseur of our art in a short future. I cannot help without being jealous of her. Why does the Great Britain, our most friendly and allied country, never send such scholars to our country? Can't you persuade your personal friends among the British officials to wake up and send some scholars?"

At the moment I felt same with my friend. But I began to think the matter carefully. I said, Arts are absolutely different from the other diplomatic matter. There should not be any feeling of jealousy at all. If Germany or any Western country becomes acquainted thoroughly with the Japanese arts, England, nay, whole Europe, will learn them quite soon. Therefore we ought to be highly delighted to hear of the earnestness of the German Government about our arts. That was my logic. But logic often doesn't go parallel with the sentimental feeling (especially in my case, as I am very sentimental). And I could not help a more or less envious feeling, like my friend. For I love England so dearly, and I wish any nice thing to happen to England *first*.

How very foolish and ignorant we were not to think that England had Mr. Arthur Morrison, the exquisite collector of the Japanese arts! Now he has published the most accomplished book on *The Japanese*

Painters in two big volumes. I hear he has spent nearly ten years for these two volumes. Evidently he has been very busy at his work just the time when Hara and I were lamenting because "England had no earnest scholar upon Japanese arts!"

I sincerely apologise to Mr. Morrison. When my friend Hara gets my information about Mr. Morrison's new books, how very delighted he will be! Nay, not only my friend, but all Japanese and English as well ought to rejoice. For England was not "behind" after all. The books were sent to me several weeks ago. Would I review them? "Let me read them, anyhow," so I said!

My anticipation was not only realised, but Mr. Morrison's work was far above it, and I do not haughtily pretend myself to "review" them. No, I would not say that. The matter of fact is, I have learnt a great deal from these books, and I was fortunate enough to have his kind invitation to his house a few days ago, and there I was allowed to look at the originals. Oh, ever so many! I felt sure that there could not be many Japanese in Japan who have such wonderful collection. It is not too much to say one needs not go to Japan to study the Japanese masterpieces, if he is lucky enough to be friend with Mr. Morrison.

Now let me open *The Painters of Japan* by Arthur Morrison, from the very beginning page, and talk with the books.

In the preface Mr. Morrison writes the history of his great and very difficult task he has gone through, and what care he has taken for reproducing the pictures. I have never seen such exquisite reproduction before. Especially those "Dan Bok no Soga" or rough sketches of the Chinese ink in tone. Particularly the "White Herons by Kaihoku Yusho," page 126, Vol. I., "Yokihi in the Heavenly Cloud by Nangaku," page 100, Vol. II., and Chinese poet by Goshun, page 102, Vol. II. They look as if the artist's brushes have passed over the very pages only a few minutes ago and some parts are still wet. Nobody could believe they were done mechanically. Frankly, the colour-prints were less successful, for which Mr. Morrison apologised heartily, and his sincere pen gives the real colour where the reproduction failed. I mean, one can imagine the original if he reads the preface. I quite agree with him that the most important part of some large pictures is their size. Very often the genuine artists have drawn a line of several feet long in one brush from their elbows. Their pluckiness is their high merit. But when these pictures were reproduced into a few inches square, they look as if they are done from the wrists and they seem quite easy for any amateur to do. However, Mr. Morrison so thoughtfully has given the measurement of the pictures in English feet as well as French metres. In whole the reproductions in these books were done with all the best possibilities that the modern process could do.

The Introduction chapter is most interesting. By reading it carefully I feel Mr. Morrison is more Japanese than most Japanese. For he does certainly understand the very inner side of the Japanese arts, naturally,

willingly and so pleasantly, from the bottom of his heart. Of course some Japanese experts know thoroughly what the Japanese arts are. But being born in Japan, their heads are saturated in their Japanese air for several generations, and all the Japanese arts come into their heads too naturally, and very often they forget (or they don't know, rather) how to explain the Japanese arts to the Western amateurs, to whom everything Japanese is quite new, and more often they seem most unnatural to the Western eyes. Here such a medium person like Mr. Morrison is indispensably necessary to convince the Westerners. Here I quote a few passages in his Introduction Chapter.

> We must accept the conditions, limits, and conventions laid down by the artist himself, and we must look at his work, as far as is possible, through his own eyes; in a word, we must judge his conclusions, not by somebody else's premises, but by his own.

How very admirable intention he has to be an art-critic! I know there are many critics who take great fancy on some pictures which suit to their own taste, and reject every thing which they cannot love (or to speak more accurately, which they cannot understand). These critics are most dangerous persons who give much damage in the art world. Why? Because only being critics and not having gone through the difficulties of practising the brushes in their hands, they generally cannot see real value of quality. Therefore they talk too highly about some works when these appeal to them, even if those works are quite third-class. And on the other hand, these critics often throw away the very first-class works only because they don't understand. The critics are just like mirrors. If you paint some pictures of your own idea on the mirror, you cannot see the reflection of other pictures on it. Mr. Morrison has given up everything himself, and polished his mirror, therefore every different school of the Japanese art began to reflect on his mirror most clearly.

I am so glad that Mr. Morrison explained fully about the relationship between writing and painting in Japan.

> Strength in the brush-stroke is the first essential sought in a close examination of a Japanese picture; by its presence or absence, its character and quality, the authenticity or the spuriousness of the picture is determined, and its attribution chiefly aided. A mere apparent dashing quickness of execution must not be mistaken for strength; it is in no way inconsistent with true power, but it is sometimes used to disguise weakness and emptiness. There is a slow, steady, deliberate force observable in some of the lines of the masters which expresses a concentrated effort, less of hand than of mind; in which the lofty conception of the painter impresses itself on silk or paper in the mere touch, independently of the design in progress . . . The Japanese mind approaches the subject of painting through caliography . . .

It is very true indeed. The other day one of my Japanese friends came to see me. He had learnt a little bit of English entirely by books. As it happened that my English friend was in the room, he thought it would be impolite to speak Japanese. He tried his broken English and said, "Are you going to *write* a sketch to-morrow?" I smiled—"*Write* a sketch?

You mean to draw a sketch!" There was another instance of the muddle between writing and painting. Some Japanese art collector used to hate the Western arts when he had not come out yet from Japan. For we have scarcely any good specimens of Western art in Japan. He always said, "I love the Chinese or Japanese arts because they are written." But when he had a trip all over Europe, he exclaimed, "Now, I really love the European arts as well. Look at those old masterpieces! They are written. I thought the western arts were *dyed*, all because I saw only those rotten oil paintings done by some young students when I was in Japan!"

About the "Kwambo," Mr. Morrison writes:—

> There is a sort of seal sometimes observed standing by itself away from the artist's signature, especially on pictures of the later Chinese school. This is the *Kwambo*, a seal to which a good deal of misapprehension has existed among European students. Dr. Anderson states that it was used to mark the spot at which the artist began his work, but this is a total mistake, which possibly originated in a misunderstood explanation by a Japanese with an imperfect command of English. The *Kwambo* is a seal carrying, as a rule, a motto or a fragment of classic verse, and it was originally kept by artists of eminence for a special purpose. From time to time some person who had acquired a picture purporting to come from the hand of an important living painter would seek out that painter to ask an assurance that the work was genuine. In such a case, should the artist recognise the work as his own, he would seal it with his *Kwambo* by way of certificate, etc.

I grieve that some Japanese must have given Mr. Morrison an information so very wrongfully.

The fact is that the Kambo means "heading." It is used only for writing. When one writes some verses or mottoes he always stamps the Kambo seal at the beginning part and his Rakkan or signature seals under his name. This custom has come from China. Certainly it must be for making the composition perfect. When he stamps his signature seals on the bottom, it makes a good balance to stamp the Kambo seal on the beginning.

It is the general rule that our writing starts from right to left. But sometimes according to the composition of a picture, the writer has to start from left to right. There is an example of this sort in the first volume *The Chinese Poet Tu Tsu-mei*, by Unkoku Togan. Page 114. Other person has written verses on that picture. To make the composition better, he has written the verses from left to right. People might try to read from right to left. At least one may be easily puzzled how to read. Therefore the writer stamped his Kambo on the beginning of his verses. How very easy for us to read!

As Mr. Morrison remarked, certainly Dr. Anderson made a mistake. He mixed up with paintings and writing all together. Let us correct Dr. Anderson's statement.

The Kambo is stamped on the beginning of writing, and not painting.

Those Japanese painters who did not write verses themselves never had the Kambo in their possession. The artists of the later Chinese

school have the Kambo as Mr. Morrison said. All because it is their custom to write their own poetries or some famous old verses on their own pictures. We call these schools Bunjin-ga or the Literalists Art. Hence they used their Kambo.

Sometimes artists stamped other seals than their signature, independently, such as the picture by Zaichiu, page 112, Vol. II. So far as my judgment goes, it is for the sake of the composition and I dare say some artists might have used their Kambo in the way Mr. Morrison mentioned. In such cases, I doubt whether it is right to call it "Kambo." But there are many things in this world, which have entirely lost the very meaning of their names. For instance, the other night I was invited to the Merchant Taylors' Company's Dinner. As the name sounded not very tempting I declined to accept it. I would not be there if my friend Douglas Sladen did not annoyingly force me to go. To my surprise there I found not a single real tailor, but all very famous persons.

By the way, just the very minute while I was writing this, my Japanese friend, Professor K., visited me. He is a great art lover and collector. He has been lately collecting Chinese arts. We talked about this matter together. He emphatically denied Mr. Morrison's statement. "But," he said, "in China, sometimes art critics stamp their *own* seals on some genuine works, but certainly not artists themselves."

Professor K. felt very sorry that there must have been some Japanese, who with little knowledge have given Mr. Morrison such wrongful information.

However, these mistakes are almost unavoidable disasters to the foreigner who gets information from Japanese, and Mr. Morrison is not quite unaware of that. For he made a foot-note in his most polite and modest way—

> And here may be an opportunity of saving many excellent Japanese gentlemen, visitors to this country, a certain degree of embarrassment and difficulty. It has been too much the custom among European collectors to assume that any Japanese, merely by virtue of nationality, must be a critic trained in the judgment of Japanese pictures. It would be as reasonable to expect every Englishman to be an infallible judge of the authenticity of a Gainsborough. Expert connoisseurs are rare in Japan, as in other countries.

Indeed, Mr. Morrison is so true. I confess I am not an "expert." What we ought to do with these books is not to discuss about such trifle mistakes, which merely come out from the poor information, of which Mr. Morrison himself has nothing to be blamed; but to see something most valuable which has sprung out from his wonderful knowledge of the Japanese arts themselves. In the main chapters Mr. Morrison deals with each of all the different schools. The Japanese history is explained as far as Art was concerned. Though his pen is so subtle one can trace the general history of Japan from these books. When the artists were politicians or warriors, their life-services for their country are well explained. Nothing is wanting for that. What a great trouble Mr. Morrison has taken

about the artists' biographies! One can easily imagine, if he read, for an example, the date of Kose-Kanaoka's life! Perhaps it is the most difficult task to trace these old masters' lives quite accurately. For Japan has had too many unreliable gossips and rumours about her great men. If you believe them all, a dead stone might easily get wings and fly up to the heaven. All because we have lacked scientific knowledge for long ages, and even most sincere and serious men often begin to believe most impossible rumours and thus they have lost their common-sense, and their statements have met with the disaster of all sorts of lies.

Mr. Morrison is a typical John Bull, who has a cool and well-balanced head and heart, and a high scientific knowledge. He has written out only the matter of fact which his well-balanced head could accept. By the way, I think very, very few Europeans understand Sesshiu. I remember last year when Sesshiu's landscapes were exhibited at Shepherd's Bush some English critic wrote in a paper that he was disappointed with them. He said, unless he had seen Sesshiu's figure pictures at the British Museum before he would not have said that Sesshiu was as great as the Japanese claim! What an absurd accusation it was! That sounded to my ear as lunatic as some so-called Socialists who tried to attack the Government because the latter used the Military force against those evil-stricken swains in South Wales and elsewhere recently. While I was reading Mr. Morrison's books I was impatient to come to the pages on Sesshiu. My anticipated joy was quite fulfilled. For Mr. Morrison writes—"To appreciate the beauties of Sesshiu's work it is necessary to see it, and more . . . the touch of Sesshiu's brush has an effect of grandeur that an unaccustomed European eye may be apt to miss . . . It is in landscape that Sesshiu's greatest triumphs were achieved, etc., etc. . . . "

About that art of repeating the same compositions handed down from gone-by old masters, I used to have great trouble to explain that to the English people, when they asked. Here Mr. Morrison has given me the strong reinforcement for my struggle.

It may be worth while here to give a word to the Eastern view of copies of works of ancient masters, a view differing wholly from that entertained in Europe. In the West a copy is a slavish repetition of its original, as a rule by an inferior hand, almost necessarily cramped in handling, and no more than a soulless imitation of the mere body of the original. Of course, copies of better pretentions exist, but even the best of these are considered to hold a low and mechanical position. In Japan—even more so in China—the greatest masters never disdained to copy the masterpieces of the painters who had preceded them. But by a copy something more than a mechanical limitation was meant. There have been copies which have surpassed the originals; and in all of them some new expression of the painter's individuality or mood is aimed at, or some new facet of the subject brought to light. In the body of the composition itself changes of detail are common—even usual. Subjects, and, in the exterior sense, compositions, become traditional, till it is often impossible to trace the brain and hand for which a particular conception first took shape.

Traditional subjects, of course, belong to a somewhat different category from repeated compositions, though I am not sure that they may not offend Western canons of originality in a merely smaller degree. As a fact, of course, they impose a far severer test of a painter's true originality than can the treatment of any outwardly and ostensibly "new" subject.

He is put openly and unavoidably into competition with the old masters who have used the subject before him, and unless he can present a wholly new view, or impress his work unmistakably with his own spirit and individuality, he fails. . . .

I regret that I cannot write my impression upon these wonderful books more in this limited space. But talking as the whole, these two large volumes ought to be looked upon as the standard for the Westerners to study Japanese Art.

YOSHIO MARKINO.

THE SECRET TRADITION IN FREEMASONRY. By A. E. WAITE. Rebman. Two vols. 42*s.* net.

Mr. Waite's volumes make no ready appeal to the uninitiate, and were not, we suppose, intended to do so. But the merest tyro may discover from them, by a proper exercise of patience, that they are the work of a man whose thought and feeling are engaged by nothing more deeply than by the problems of the spiritual life. His object is to survey the history of Freemasonry in its almost innumerable branches, and, so far as is possible without betrayal of precious secrets, to show that the essence of the matter, its living principle, has lain in the recognition of certain mystical and religious truths commemorated by symbolism, such symbolism being to those who understand it a language, to those who do not understand it, a veil.

It would not be easy to convey an impression of the range of Mr. Waite's studies in all those strange branches of human activity with which Freemasonry at one time or another had connections; the Kabalistic books, the treatises of Alchemists and Astrologers, the whole catalogue of mediaeval mysteries which the normal English reader knows only as names, are, as it were, Mr. Waite's substitutes for Tennyson or Shelley or Browning. And it is, we must admit, a trying feature in his book that, through the author's choice or temperament or training, his exposition is so seldom direct. Indeed he seems generally to assume in regard to matters which are not at the moment under explanation knowledge which, if one had it, might, one surmises, make the explanation unnecessary. His style also, particularly when he is on the outskirts of his subject, is extremely ponderous and forbidding. He devotes a prodigious amount of space to the preliminary outlining of his course and, as he advances upon it, he halts repeatedly to tell the reader where he is. But this is done in such majestic circumlocutions that the result is nothing but confusion. Mr. Waite, in short, has not the art of saying a straightforward thing straightforwardly, and, in the matter of adapting the elevation of his style to that of the subject in hand, his instincts seem altogether insecure. His theme being esoteric, it involves him, no doubt, in the use of curious terms and phrases which have their value, as he might say, to those for whom

they are intended. But it is hard to believe that copious reliance upon such words as "herein," "thereof," (to create, one must suppose, a biblical flavour,) can have a serious value for anybody. The lay mind, one remembers, associates much study of symbolism with a loosening hold upon the accepted standards of common sense; and the enthusiast swimming in symbolic systems is apt to recall a certain pious lady whose consolation was "that blessed word, Mesopotamia!"

No one could read through two volumes like these of Mr. Waite's without experiencing to some extent the fascination of the Masonic mysteries. What does this secret knowledge of theirs, what do these various, competing, complicated initiations, amount to? The great influence which has been exercised by Freemasonry in the past and the vitality of its organisation at the present day are the facts upon which curiosity really fastens. Has Mr. Waite any light to throw upon the nature of the force which binds the Masonic brotherhoods together? Their systems are, in his view, essentially religious in their aim and sanction, and, as vehicles for the spiritual enlightenment of mankind, he thinks of them as parallel with the churches. The difference, to one taking an external view of both, might seem to be expressible in this way—that the Masonic mysteries are hidden, while the mysteries of the church hide themselves. The power of mystery is enormous. Freemasonry appeals to it from the first. But although the efficacy of the appeal is unquestionable, Mr. Waite must forgive us for questioning its wisdom and fruitfulness. That many Masonic leaders have been genuine mystics we need not presume to doubt; but evidence derivable from Mr. Waite's own pages suggests that the Masonic system and method places the rank and file of Masons singularly at the mercy of impostors and quacks. In Mr. Waite's view, Freemasonry is essentially corroborative of the Christian revelation; but he admits, for example, that the organisation of the Lodges was used by the promoters of the French Revolution.

The general impression one derives from his account might be expressed in a metaphor by a comparison of Freemasonry with Baconian heresy. One gathers or infers that the mind of the typical Freemason is of the type to which a page of poetry appeals primarily as the hunting-ground for an anagram. The labour of discovering, shall we say of inventing, the anagram, involves prolonged attention to the text of a poem; and by the time the discovery is complete, a certain kind of appreciation of the poet has dawned upon the seeker's mind, an appreciation which otherwise he might not have attained to. But in the meantime he has saddled his mind with a superstition, which clogs at once his perceptions and his reasoning powers—with a rooted belief, that is, in the interdependence of poetry and anagrams. And this is the price of his achievement.

We should be giving an altogether false idea of Mr. Waite's book, if we left it to be inferred that he was a man to be imposed upon by charlatanry. He devotes some excellent pages to the denunciation of various kinds of trifling, much contemporary "psychical research" among the rest. From

time to time, as he deals with the webs and veils of Masonic or other symbolism, he introduces pages of exposition written with admirable lucidity and with an earnestness of spirit to which every reader will respond. The secret behind all secrets, we once or twice thought we heard him telling us, can be and has been very simply expressed. "The Kingdom of God is within you"; the words in their familiarity are so mysterious that to write them is to give nothing away! *Φωναντα συνετοισιν*—eloquent to the wise—is the motto which we may apply to them, and it is a motto which, if we ponder it, shows the Masonic veils on their tawdry side. The Kingdom of God is the lost "word" which the "adept" discovers, the goal of attainment, the ultimate mystery. But, and herein surely lies the Masonic blunder, it is a mystery, not because it is hidden, but because it is not hidden; because, it being with us, we are not with it. To draw veils, to pique curiosity, these are strange and trivial expedients in such a case. The world is not a peep-show, and we must not pretend to understand the state of mind of those who hope to spread enlightenment by pretending that it is.

POETRY

THE BALLAD OF THE WHITE HORSE. By G. K. CHESTERTON. London: Methuen & Co. 5*s*.

The one great truth in Mr. Kipling's *Stalky and Co.* (it is taught as far as we remember in the story of a certain lecturer who visited the school) is the lesson that consciously organised patriotism is rather indecent. We are therefore a little uneasy when we find Epics being written to encourage us to love England: Mr. Alfred Noyes making a sort of Tariff Reform Hero out of Drake, and Mr. Chesterton retorting with a defence of Little England, a ballad of popular tradition about Alfred, King of Wessex, and his fight for

> **An island like a little book**
> **Full of a hundred tales.**

Alfred, who is so well prompted with Mr. Chesterton's own philosophy of life that he remains rather an indistinct figure, encouraged by a vision of Our Lady to fight the Danish invader, gathers forces from Saxon and Celt and Roman settler, goes harp-playing in the Danish camp, burns the cakes and points a moral of Christian humility, and after a desperate and Homeric battle at Ethandune, sits in his apple orchard to give laws to his little kingdom of Wessex, which lies "in a patch of peace, Like a dog in a patch of sun." That is the admirable story that Mr. Chesterton has put

into a series of eight ballads—an epic of Little England in eight little books. He has done well to choose the form of the ballad, which is the natural narrative for the simple and strange tales of a nation's heart. Unfortunately Mr. Chesterton's philosophy is no more simple, in spite of his protestations, than a drawing by Aubrey Beardsley. The true ballad note sounds only once or twice, and thrills when it sounds, in the whole book.

> Prince Colan slew a score of them,
> And was stricken to his knee;
> King Alfred slew a score and seven
> And was borne back on a tree.

Most often the effect produced is that of the familiar but ever delightful column in Saturday's *Daily News*.

It is difficult to find out the exact content of Mr. Chesterton's philosophy, for he is always more explicit in the denunciation of *Heretics* than in the definition of *Orthodoxy*. It would be obviously unjust to attribute to him the ambition he certainly suggests, to be at once Christian, drunk, and ignorant; and, moreover, the drunkenness and the ignorance are apparently as characteristic of the Danes as of Alfred, while the Christianity is of the sort which is for ever fading into a mystical antinomy. We must be content to know without further analysis that Mr. Chesterton would like to inspire a desperate resistance of hilarious Churchmen against scientific Agnosticism.

But vagueness besets Mr. Chesterton not only in philosophy but also in poetry, and is even more disastrous. He is fond of big, loose words; tells us of "enormous swine," "monstrous mushrooms" and "monstrous water-maids"—characteristic phrases in which all the epithets are really negative terms, denoting a sort of Gothic absence of forms of "purple moons" which are irrelevant because he has not really imagined them but only felt indistinctly that they sound jolly. Sometimes, of course, his decadent love of insignificant paradox leads him by the nose, as when he refers to "the red heavens of hell" for no reason except that by using "heavens" in the sense of "roof" he can obtain a titillating juxtaposition; and this amuses him so much that he repeats it in a later book. His similes are nearly always ineffective through the vagueness of their reference; for the clearness of the associated image seems to be essential in poetry. "Hairy men as huge as sin," "he faded like some elf in fear," "a string that sighed like all desire," "he moved like a massacre." "His heart was orbed like victory, and simple like despair." Such phrases, we believe, account for the fact that there is less continuous poetical emotion in Mr. Chesterton's Ballad of Alfred than in Macaulay's Ballad of Horatius.

It is a great pity, because he really knows and feels the simple motives that move the hearts of men; the description of the battle in Kensington Gardens at the end of *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* was as thrilling as the *Iliad*. And the poet's vision and the poet's joy are still in him

sometimes, and make the Ballad of the White Horse good to read. Eldred is the Saxon franklin who

> will watch the certain things,
> Swine, and slow moons like silver rings,
> And the ripening of the plums.

There is a lovely description of his farm marching to join Alfred :—

> And grey cattle and silver lowed
> Against the unlifted morn,
> And straw clung to the spear-shafts tall,
> And a boy went before them all
> Blowing a ram's horn.

That stanza is full of good life and movement. And Mr. Chesterton can put even into the mouth of that sad agnostic Guthrum, such a sweet song as this :—

> The little brooks are very sweet,
> Like a girl's ribbons curled,
> But the great sea is bitter
> That washes all the world.

THE CRUCIBLES OF TIME : AND OTHER POEMS. By DARRELL FIGGIS. London : J. M. Dent and Sons. 3s. 6*d*. net.

It is no use saying anything to Mr. Figgis. He strides ahead with a certain magnificence, shocks us with his strange words, jangles our delicate ears, makes himself, we tell each other, a little ridiculous, and yet produces something, verse, ode, or drama, which often indeed we only guess, but sometimes we infallibly know to be good poetry.

Let us look first at the long dramatic poem on the Biblical subject of Job and his anastrophe, which gives its name to the book. There are six "Persons" in the drama—Job, his wife, three Messengers, and a slave ; besides "Personages"—The Presence, Mephistopheles, and choruses of Pities and of Furies. The first thing we notice is Mr. Figgis's unfortunate series of adventures with the second person singular. "Thou poured," "thou doth," "thou clomb," "thou worshippeth," offend our instinctive sense of right grammar, though perhaps we should not care to be suddenly challenged to give the correct form in each case. We have hardly recovered from such solecisms as these when "blosmy arbourage" springs up and chokes us ; and on the next page we are almost equally offended by the banality of an "aching void." And yet we do not stop reading, led on perhaps by the boldness of the conception, and a certain freedom of language, an oblivion of the minor politenesses of diction, which seems appropriate to the theme. And we are soon rewarded, by the first Messenger's speech, for instance, written in an irregular rhymed metre, direct and strong, and yet rich with a sort of Aeschylean ornateness. And so Mr.

Figgis proceeds, his ardour and dignity carrying him over worse obstacles than blosmy arbourages. "Upon his feet," as Job says of the Messenger, "his cloudy paces clothe him with bright wings." He dares to follow Swinburne into lyric themes and lyric metres in which he flounders like a David trying to dance a Bacchanalian Saraband; and yet he survives and continues to give us some splendid phrases and a sense of exaltation and magnificence.

Mr. Figgis is not a lyric poet. He hardly ever, if at all, gives us that sudden piercing thrill which is the unanalysable sign of the keenest form of poetry. Most of the shorter pieces in this volume are unsuccessful: his conception perhaps is too rough and large to embrace closely the smooth surface of a song: dignity becomes clumsiness. Once, indeed, in a piece called The Pity of It, describing how the poet suddenly realised that man suffers the penalty of being lord of creation, does he achieve complete beauty on a lyric scale, in a manner that recalls Meredith. This is perhaps the only example in the book, and there is evidence that it was written in a sudden pang of very real emotion. For the rest Mr. Figgis compels us to read him; for his marmoreal manner and rather baroque phraseology convey some genuine thought about the world.

THE POEMS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. Edited by C. D. LOCOCK. With an Introduction by A. CLUTTON-BROCK. Methuen. Two vols. 21*s.* net.

To those who are familiar with Mr. Clutton-Brock's book, *Shelley; The Man and the Poet*, much that he says in his Introduction to these two handsome volumes will come as a thing to be expected. It is worthy of remark that the subtlest criticism of Shelley yet achieved, Francis Thompson's to wit, sprang from an attitude of imaginative and intellectual sympathy. Yet it is well, perhaps, that Shelley should be regarded now and then from the standpoint of a man whose faith it is that by planting his feet robustly on good brown earth he has won his unshakable reality—a faith, by the way of incident, that modern physics would dissipate not less surely than ancient mysticism. When, as in the case of Mr. Clutton-Brock, this four-square and unshakable attitude provides the platform from which its occupant directs a glance of very genuine admiration toward the aerial creature that wings the heavenly blue, a situation is created that very considerably stimulates the thought. If Francis Thompson is left alone on the one hand, equally well is Matthew Arnold left alone on the other. If we can imagine a Captain Trelawney that would not be "converted," and who had never had the personal thrill of "seeing Shelley plain," that Captain Trelawney would be Mr. A. Clutton-Brock.

Here in his Introduction we have the mental attitude of his earlier book in the succinctness of a brief essay, and without the circumstantial

happenings of incident and illustration. Inasmuch as he does not examine Shelley from the standpoint of constructive criticism, but rather from that of a destructive analysis, patient and vigorous, it is to be expected that his analysis will be well lodged. It is: though it is not sufficient. For instance, he says truly enough that Shelley, seeking perfection on the earth, and not finding it, turned eagerly to the creation of an unreal phantasmal world, where all that was lovely was utterly lovely, and where all that was evil was utterly evil, and in which the utterly lovely did not so much overcome the utterly evil, as the evil fell away supinely at the existence of the lovely. This is undeniably true. But when Mr. Clutton-Brock proceeds to suggest that Shelley merely took rank as a religious poet, though without the organised terminology and symbolism of religion, his criticism passes to a constructive region where it is impossible to follow him. The corner-stone of all religion, surely, Christian and otherwise (though chiefly and foremostly the Christian), is not the dissipation of evil, but the recognition, explanation, and atonement of evil. Shelley had some perfectly amazing correspondence with Christianity: some startling similarities of ambition and aspiration. But there is this sharp and fundamental difference: that whereas Shelley, in his heavenly lust for perfection, makes evil incalculably evil, and then brushes it away inexplicably, Christianity faces the problem, offers its solution, and promises a triumph over it. Shelley deliberately overlooked the problem; and he purchased immortality in his poetry, not as a "saint who cannot be reconciled to this world," but as a fierce soul who, in his mighty lust for loveliness, neglected this world.

It is, perhaps, inevitable that Mr. Clutton-Brock's more obvious glory should obscure Mr. Locock's industrious toil in this edition. It is surely interesting to see a handsome edition such as this grow out of the four volumes that Mr. Locock had in charge for the ill-starred Standard library, and take its place beside Professor Delincourt's edition of Keats, and Mr. George Wyndham's edition of Shakespeare's poems, in two dignified volumes. But there is one criticism with regard to it that is inevitable; two, in fact, though the first is only truly introductory to the other. However excellent it be to read Mr. Clutton-Brock's introduction, and to be angry at much of it, it has this serious dissatisfaction, that thereby Mr. Clutton-Brock has somewhat elbowed Mr. Locock away from the explanations expected of him. The publishers tell us, on the paper "cap" covering the volumes, that "the worthless juvenile verses which preceded 'Queen Mab' are omitted"; but I for one would have liked to have heard the responsible agent on the subject. Not but what I agree with their exclusion, though there are certain lines addressed to Harriet that have a proper interest, albeit not poetic. Juvenilia are generally best excluded. Still, as a matter of more than formal interest, it is well to be apprised of the principles germane to the erection of such an edition as this. The same announcement goes on to say that "the work includes some later poems which have not yet appeared in any edition." Now,

I have before me, Mr. H. Buxton Foreman's edition of 1876, since which much water has flowed, and Mr. Hutchinson's admirable Oxford edition, and for the life of me I cannot find the new matter. I do not doubt its existence. I know of new matter since Mr. Hutchinson's edition that should be and would be included in this; but it is scarcely fair to readers that they should laboriously have to collate Contents lists arranged on different systems when a few words from the editor would have completed the necessary aid. And it is certainly ironical that two such portly tomes as these should exclude matter that is to be found in the Oxford edition that costs an eighth as much.

It is, however, in its critical apparatus that this edition chiefly distinguishes itself. This is elaborate and complete to the full limits of possible requirement. The arrangement of the poems is largely that of Mr. Hutchinson's edition, beginning at "Master" and continuing the longer poems through to "The Triumph of Life"; then going back to the shorter poems, and following these through from 1814—1822. This means truly that the poems especially loved are obscured in the interests of law and order. Yet it is salutary; for Shelley demands a complete learning. It is rather curious that the two volumes should open respectively with "Master" and "Epipsychidion." It is more than merely curious; it is a sign and an indication.

FICTION

THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND, AND OTHER STORIES. By H. G. WELLS. Nelson. 2*s.* net.

Perhaps we are on the eve of a revival of the short story. Even on those bookstalls that seem to gather together whatsoever things are shoddy into labelled pyramids to bewilder the passer-by, you may see, peeping up to sight, pocket editions of the short stories of Mr. W. W. Jacobs, or you look at your copy of Oliver Onions' *Widdershins*, and find on it the pleasing words "second edition." Or the gay sea-dog, on the cover of a collection of short stories by Morley Roberts, smiles out at you from a prominent place in the bookseller's window. Perhaps the Short Story in England is going to get over the damage it received from that parrot cry to the effect that there is only one short story and it is by Maupassant. More than one lover of the Short Story must have treasured an old *Butterfly*, because in its pages was a story called "A Vision of Judgment." It was signed "D. O." And many must have wondered who "D. O." was, and kept a watchful eye for these two letters. It was one of the cleverest stories in that brilliant magazine that flourished in the 'nineties. Now we know it was by Mr. Wells. It is in this volume.

We have not yet read all the stories. "I would rather have it dipped

in and dipped in again than read severely through," says Mr. Wells, in his preface. We shall continue to dip into it.

A man with some knowledge of laboratories and a natural inclination towards the study of astronomy, a very vivid imagination, and a delightful gift of humour, is the writer of these stories.

"It was, O God, a very little planet," says the Angel, in response to the question: "Is this *all*?" When the inhabitants of the earth are assembled there is a big thought underlying that. And the story in which it occurs ("A Vision of Judgment") is a very big piece of work. It has its delightful witticisms, too. "That's Henry the Eighth," says a fussy person named Smith, in the crowd, who are being taken in alphabetical order. "There'll be a good bit of evidence. Oh, damn! He's Tudor." But the depths of the story are as compelling as the froth of it; and all should read (who know not already) how the proud King told bravely all his sins and vices in a magnificent confession, how God said "*Did* he do all this?" How the Recording Angel flattened the book with his hand and said "In a way," and then began to read, "and then just the movement of a muscle or so, and all that dignity of defiance was gone" from the little King. The case of the holy man, who explained how he had sat outside the gates "as a sign, as a wonder" is worth pondering, too. "As a perfect nuisance," said the Recording Angel—and began to read. But the story must be read.

The central ideas of the stories are fascinating. "The Country of the Blind" has for central idea the advent of a man who can see, into a deep valley peopled by a blind folk. It says much for Mr. Wells's power that we gasp, and rush on to see what is to happen when one of their elders finds that the stranger's brain would become perfectly rational if an operation was performed upon him and the two little soft things, one on each side above the nose, were cut away; and the girl he has fallen in love with begs him to submit to the operation, in the name of his love, and become perfectly rational, like other beings in the "Country of the Blind." "The man who could work miracles" is delightfully humorous, and might easily, on a referendum, be voted the most perfect story of its length Mr. Wells has ever written. How his little knowledge becomes a terror to him is once again the product of imagination playing humorously with astronomical facts. "The Crystal Egg" that is common to Mars and to our planet and, peering into which, Mr. Cave sees a Martian peering on the other side—once again is born of a mind scientific and fanciful. "Davidson's Eyes," the story of a man who, in a thunderstorm, working at his electrometer, receives a shock that plunges him into a Fourth Dimensional World so that, while really in his London home, he sees, by a sort of "kink in space," what is going on in an island of the Antipodes, wholly grips the reader. "The Stolen Bacillus" has some wonderful touches. They surely must make any reader throw up his head and laugh with delight. Perhaps we *are* on the eve of a revival of interest in the Short Story—an end of the Maupassant fetish and the

"damn at a venture" attitude of too many people who should know better; they sometimes talk about Short Stories in the peevish accents of the Miss who is offered a volume of Short Stories by the library assistant—and poohs at it as if she bore the author a personal malice. Mr. Wells's forcible preface on behalf of the Short Story would only make her, we fear, if she could be got to read it, pout the more. After all, every author writes, in Mr. Yeats's phrase, for his "friends." But we admire Mr. Wells's defence of the Short Story none the less for that.

ABOVE YOUR HEADS. By FREDERICK NIVEN. Martin Secker. 6*s*.

We have it on the authority of Mr. H. G. Wells that, owing to inadequate criticism, or, as he might have said with fuller truth, inadequate appreciation, which is a thing of greater importance, there is no encouragement now-a-days for the capable writer of the short story. Whether that be the cause or not, it is certain that there are fewer good short stories being written to-day than there were say a dozen years ago. It behoves us therefore to be properly alert in the presence of any serious attempt to maintain our excellent tradition in this difficult art. Mr. Frederick Niven's *Above Your Heads* is certainly a case in point, and significantly enough his title is derived from the fact that the stories in his volume have all suffered rejection at the hands of various editors, on the grounds that they were above the heads of the public, although, and Mr. Niven might have mentioned it, most, if not all of them ultimately experienced the usual journalistic incarnation. The challenge such a volume might have represented is thus lessened; still, providing the stories in *Above Your Heads* were submitted judiciously, it is not even possible to account for the initial rejection of two-thirds of them without convicting the incriminated editors with, at least, carelessness. Most of the stories are certainly not above the heads of a fairly large intelligent public, and some of them have very obvious elements of popular approval. They are all, however, possessed of a decisive and frankly self-conscious literary finish, which in itself, for good or ill, is enough to scare any editor of a popular journal, because, rightly or wrongly, it is believed the average reader dislikes that sort of thing; it may make him feel unpleasantly small, which is quite a sufficient basis of objection. The appearance of the stories in their present form can hardly help matters, for the average reader does not read short stories except in periodicals, and the reader of taste, a small enough quantity at any time, must be already converted to the excellences of Mr. Niven's work, both in the form of the novel and the short tale. As regards the contents of the present volume no one would call them great; they are good, and sometimes very good, and always readable; but not one of the short stories would place Mr. Niven among the masters. His undoubted skill as a writer of fiction does not get fair play in this medium; his mind is not sufficiently detached, it is too consequential, and therefore more adapted to the novel form, in which his accomplishment is already somewhat of an achievement. The effect of

this is that his short stories are not, strictly speaking, short stories at all, except in a few instances, and then they are not his best; the majority are literary sketches, studies. In the light of Mr. Wells's definition of a short story, "what anyone of courage and imagination can get told in twenty minutes or so," they are all within the pale, but Mr. Wells defines short stories more loosely than he writes them. A real short story is almost as definable as a sonnet, its brief form should be inevitable, and the reader ought to feel that it could not have been extended. Such are Poe's *Ligeia*, Maupassant's *Boule de Suif*, Frank Harris's *Montes*, Stephen Crane's *Maggie*, or Wells's own magnificent *Country of the Blind*. You read these stories with delight and satisfaction; they are brief, but complete; extension would have spoiled them. As a sonnet is, in Rossetti's words, a moment's monument, so are these the monuments of incidents. Mr. Niven's stories, like "The Little Dancer," "The Mother," and all of the delightful Western sketches at the end of the book, leave you wondering what went before and behind; they give you the impression of having been arbitrarily severed from the author's experience or vision of things, and that they would have found a surer vitality in the pages of a novel. Such a view may be academic, but the fact that *Above Your Heads* induces such considerations proves its distinction. There are sixteen stories in the volume, eight of them studies of life in Western Canada. These are full of humour and keen observation of character; and almost anybody could read them with the same sort of pleasure that one gets out of Bret Harte or Mr. Niven's own *Lost Cabin Mine*. Two of the other eight, "The Two Marvells," and "The Sprig of Alder," recount incidents of the past; another is a rather shallow dip into the future, telling of an aerial trip to Scotland; and the remaining five are studies of modern temperament, the best of which is probably "A Wind-blown Rose." It is doubtful whether Mr. Niven ever writes a story for the mere joy of telling a yarn; you always feel that he has some ulterior object; not a moral object—he is never avowedly didactic—but he wants you to realise with him the significance of certain happenings; and as, like Gray, he never speaks out, you often have an unpleasant feeling that you have missed his point. That, however, rather adds to the piquancy of his careful and sensitive art, which at its best reaches an intensity of expression found in few English writers of the younger generation. His style is impressionist and personal, and each story or sketch in *Above Your Heads* has in it something memorable, be it a phrase, a thought, an emotion, a glimpse of character, a word-picture, or a far-off hint of laughter. The public would help modern literature by giving such a book as this readier recognition than the editors who saw it first and to whom it is dedicated.

To the Outside. By A. Curtis Sherwood. Cornish Bros.

Somewhat Continental in make-up and outside appearance, and bearing the legend "printed for private circulation," this book attracts at a first glance by its novelty—it is difficult to believe that anything but

a reprint would be produced in this style. The book is a protest against convention—Lilias, the heroine, protests, and suffers somewhat in her experiment, through which she finally wins freedom and happiness. The Reverend Robert Pompilious Perry is representative of an all too common type of Churchman: a stickler for the conventions, an insufferably dull person to live with, and amazingly uninteresting in his narrowness. The author has portrayed him admirably, but the book leaves us wondering that such an odiously extreme specimen of a fast-disappearing type was not more frequently found out. Lilias, we fear, would be far more attractive if she did not protest so much—there is, after all, a word to be said for the "inside," and the author has not said it.

Although every precaution is taken, the Proprietor will not be responsible for the loss of, or damage or any other accidents that may occur to, the manuscripts that may be sent in for consideration.